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FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

A CRIMSON PRICE

by Elliott Lester

Brigham

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A CRIMSON PRICE

FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

by

Elliott Lester

CHAPTER ONE

DETECTIVE RADING gave his cigar a few extra vicious chews by way of emphasizing the fact that he was irritated. Here he was on a corner off Lower Fifth avenue, facing his destination, the Hotel Bensor across the street, and yet he could not cross over to it because of the heavy pre-theatre crush of autos.

He felt like the foolish hen in the fairy tale who starved to death, and all the while unwittingly she was sitting on a full bag of corn.

Detective Rading was to dine that evening with one of New York's biggest men in that very select hotel opposite, and now for at least five minutes he had been detained from dinner.

It wasn't every day that he was asked to dine at the Bensor. He had often visited it professionally and had always been overawed by the heavy marble columns, the luxurious hangings, the massive chairs in the lobby, and the silent-footed, respect-compelling waiters in the dining-room. But this evening he was to combine business necessity with social enjoyment, for Mr. James Truess, retired banker and sportsman, had requested his presence at dinner.

He knew the reason for Truess's invitation. A few hurried words over the telephone had advised him that the dinner was to be in the nature of a professional consultation concerning a threatened attempt on the millionaire's life.

"You know, Rading," Truess had phoned, "we fellows usually don't pay any attention to threats that we get. All reds who don't succeed in life feel that we fellows who do attain some of the world's goods are responsible for their lack of attainment. So they threaten, every once in a while, to 'pop' one of us off by way of spiting the world, but they usually forgot to 'pop.' This affair, however, is different. There's a woman in the case, and when they get hysterical they're dangerous. That's what I want to see you about tonight."

Well, if the traffic jam eased up a bit, Rading would soon learn all the details about Truess and this "hysterical" woman of his. So he chewed a little harder on his cigar and scowled at the traffic officer as though this would compel his whistle to blow and his right hand to ascend, thereby causing a mystic cessation in the flow of cars.

Meanwhile, a scene strangely contrasted to the hurry and tumult outside was taking place

in the living-room of the suite occupied by Mr. James Truess.

Only one light was switched on in the room, the mellow light of a dome of Venitian glass that swung over the table, and its warm rays fell on the figure of a man lying outstretched on the floor beside the table, strangely silent. He lay on his back and the stiff front of his shirt was dyed red—red that still oozed from a wound over the heart.

The other occupant of the room was a man in full dress who worked swiftly and silently, paying not the slightest attention to the dead man on the floor.

From their various positions about the room this man took chairs and arranged them about the table. His own chair and that which the dead man had occupied made the number four. From the buffet he then took four glasses and a decanter of whisky. Into each glass he poured a few drops of liquor, just enough to wet the bottom of each glass. He then arranged them on the table in positions in front of each chair.

He stepped back from the table now and surveyed the arrangement. So far satisfactory, it seemed, for he again stepped to the table and stooping down he took from the dead man's vest pocket a gold-chased cigarette case. The light from the dome overhead scintillated along the carvings on the case and played along the initials "J. T." engraved thereon. From it the visitor drew two cigarettes, and then he replaced the case in the dead man's pocket.

He carefully broke the two cigarettes in half and then in turn lighted each piece. These four stubs he placed on the table — three in a little tray in the centre of the table and one beside one of the whisky glasses. The effect was as though one of the smokers was careless and had not used the tray; besides, not having finished his cigarette he had propped it near him on a matchstick so as not to injure the polish of the table.

Again the visitor in the dress suit stepped back and examined his work. The position of one of the chairs in its relation to the ensemble did not suit him this time, so he moved it back until he was satisfied with its situation.

The time occupied in setting the scene had not been more than a few minutes. The man had gone about his work with a precision that showed careful planning and a definite knowledge of where to locate things in the room.

Going to the door leading to the corridor, he looked down upon the dead man.

"Good-night, Jimmy Truess," he muttered, "and may your passage to hell be a pleasant one," and pressing a switch on the side wall he threw the room into darkness.

Detective Rading's cigar was chewed to a pulpy mass by the time he was finally able to cross Broadway. Then he hurried up to Truess's room.

He knocked on the door, but there was no response. He knocked again, and louder. Still no reply.

"Strange," he muttered. "They said at the desk he was expecting me."

Again he rapped.

Going to the elevator, he descended to the office desk.

"Say," he said to the clerk, "didn't you say that Mr. Truess was waiting for me?"

"Mr. Rading, are you? Yes, sir; he left word to send you right up."

"Well, he doesn't answer my knocks on the door."

"Perhaps he's asleep," suggested the clerk.

"Maybe; but he'd hardly take a nap when he was expecting some one to call. Looks peculiar to me."

"Why, you don't think——" gasped the clerk hurriedly. Anything that was in anyway out of the ordinary, that could possibly be used to tarnish the gilded name of the hotel, was a calamity too horrible even to conceive."

"I don't think anything," replied Rading. "Call him up on the phone."

The clerk obeyed. He rang long and persistently, but there was no response.

"No reply, sir," he reported in an awed tone of voice.

"Got a house detective here?"

"Yes, sir. You don't think——" he began again, but a glance from Rading silenced the question.

The house detective was a pompous individual, Lornt by name, grown fat and opinionated by aristocratic feeding and a life of utter uselessness in the hotel.

Together Rading and Lornt went to Tru-

ess's suite, the house detective as questioning as the clerk had been; but Rading had been too long on the force and too trained in crime detection to volunteer any suppositions of fact when the actual facts were themselves within easy access.

As they received no reply to their knocks on the door, Lornt opened it with a duplicate key and pressed the electric switch on the side of the door.

The light of the lamp divulged to their querying eyes the table with the four chairs ranged around, and the glasses and the cigarettes—signs of hospitable conviviality.

"He's not here," gasped Lornt. He had expected some gory scene, and the quiet aspect of the room was a distinct shock to him; just as a man who has nerved himself to a cold plunge is surprised on finding the water warm.

"He's not here," he repeated.

"So you said the first time," dryly commented Rading. "Now, this is peculiar. I was to dine with him at seven and——" He paused and sniffed the air.

"What is it?" asked Lornt quickly.

Rading did not reply, but stepping farther into the room, he made a rapid survey of all places. As his glance fell behind the table, trained and hardened to crime as he was, he uttered a gasp of horror.

"What is it?" cried Lornt.

Rading pointed to the figure lying on the floor, a deep red blotch on the white shirt-front, like a poppy in a daisy field.

"It's Truess!" gasped Lornt. "Dead?"

Rading nodded.

"It was his blood I smelt," he said, and drawing a cigar from his pocket he began to chew on it reflectively as he gazed down at the dead man.

CHAPTER TWO

"WHO could have done it, and why?" gasped Lornt.

"Not so fast," snapped Rading. "We've got to take things easy here," and stepping to the side of the dead man he felt the pulse. No throbbing beat met his fingers.

The smell of blood was fresh in the room; the blood on Truess's shirt-front was not yet coagulated.

"Whoever did this job finished it just before we came in," he said as he rose to his feet.

"But we saw no one in the corridor," protested Lornt.

"Of course not; but that doesn't prove that some one hadn't left just before we came in. Most likely the murderer was in this room as I knocked here the first time, and made good his getaway when I went down to the office."

"Well, let's hurry, then!"

"All right, let's hurry. Where to? After whom?" Rading asked in disgust. "Has he had any visitors, do you know?" But before the house detective could reply he stepped to the phone and called up the hotel office. There he was advised that no one had asked for Truess, that no one had gone up to see him as far as the office force knew.

"Send a doctor up here to Truess's room at once. Any physician that's in the building will do," Rading requested.

Turning to Lornt he said: "Inquire of the elevator boys if they can recollect bringing any one up who inquired where Truess was located, or"—he glanced at the chairs and the glasses—"if they brought a group of men to this floor."

"Women, too?" suggested Lornt.

"No. These cigarettes and glasses would indicate that only men were here."

As Lornt went out on his quest Rading phoned to police headquarters and notified them of the tragedy.

"Suicide?" he repeated, in response to a question of headquarters. "I hardly think so. I haven't gone over the clues yet, but from the general layout of the place it looks like a party at which some one got mad and potted Truess off. There's a woman somewhere in the case, I'm sure of that. I'll call you up as soon as the doctor I've sent for makes his exam."

Going over to the doorway, Rading surveyed the room from this point. His alert eyes took in all the details of the room—the position of the dead man, the arrangement of materials on the table. Then, stepping to the side of the room on which the dead man lay,

he noted his position in relation to the other objects in the room.

His examination of the body itself was but cursory, for he was interrupted by the entrance of Lornt and another man.

"This is Doctor Berns," said Lornt. "He's been sent here by the office. The elevator boys said——"

"Never mind them now," interrupted Rading. "We'll come to them in due course. Glad to know you, doctor," he said to the tall, distinguished-looking man who had accompanied Lornt. "Look over this man here, won't you?"

"Why, it's Mr. Truess!" gasped the doctor. Used to sights of death as he was, yet the spectacle of this well-known banker lying in a little pool of his own blood was sufficient to make him lose his self-possession. Without further ado, however, he applied his stethoscope to the man's heart, merely as a matter of form, for at a glance one could see that the body was without life.

"No, no," he said. "Dead."

He touched the blood on Truess's bosom and noted the degree of coagulation that had set in. "But not dead more than twenty or thirty minutes! The murderer may still be about! Why don't you search for him?" he cried to the detectives.

"One minute is as good as thirty, doctor," said Rading. "No use of our rushing about, just in order to appear active and on the job. This case must be studied scientifically and solved scientifically, for we are thirty minutes too late in arriving on the scene. It looks like a stiletto wound to me, doctor. What do you make of it?"

While the doctor was examining the wound as best he could without disarranging the position of the body, Rading turned to question Lornt.

"Now, what did you find out from the elevator boys, Lornt?"

"None of them remembers taking any one special up here. No one asked them for Truess's room, and none of them recollects a party of men either getting on or off at this floor."

"Did they notice anybody very agitated getting on the elevator on this floor or on the floor above or below?"

"No," said Lornt slowly. "I didn't ask them anything so definite as that, but from the way I questioned them I think they would have told me of it had they noticed any one in that condition."

"Next time be particular in your questions," snapped Rading. "Don't wait for them to volunteer information; go after them yourself," and turning his back on Lornt, he watched the doctor at his work.

Lornt did not relish this curt criticism, but as he was in no position to resent it openly, he decided to hold his peace until an opportunity presented itself to prove that it wasn't warranted.

"I'll keep my eyes open on this case," he said to himself, "and I'll bet I pull one over on you, Mr. Smarty Detective."

Dr. Berns was examining the wound with a small pocket microscope and probing gently into it to find out the depth.

"Did you know Truess?" he asked without raising his head.

"Slightly," replied Rading.

"He was a big man," volunteered Lornt. "Society leader, retired banker, sportsman, and all that. Some very swell people came to see him here, society dames and——"

"Who were some of them?" snapped Rading, turning quickly to him.

"I—I don't know their names," stammered Lornt, taken back by the abruptness of the question, "but I guess I——"

"Don't guess," Rading interrupted him with a growl; and Lornt lapsed into a mood of sullen despair at the attitude assumed by this vigorous, uncompromising detective beside him.

"I knew something about Truess," said Dr. Berns. "He was engaged, it was commonly rumored, to Elene Nambeil. You've heard of her, of course."

Rading nodded.

"Her pictures have been in all society columns," continued the physician, "and Truess's name has several times been mentioned in connection with hers, although no one has seemingly been able to get a definite verification of their engagement from either of them."

"She's the girl with that younger brother who—the chap who was mixed up in some

woman scandal or other, isn't she?" asked Rading.

"Yes. William Nambeil," replied the doctor. "I don't remember the details of the case; they were hushed up at once in the newspapers, but I know it was some married woman and he in a merry affair. Well," he continued, rising to his feet, "there's not much doubt here. A very thin-bladed knife, perhaps three or four inches in length, has been thrust just above Truess's heart. Death was practically instantaneous."

"Thanks, doctor. That will do. You'll be ready to testify at the coroner's inquest, won't you?"

"Of course. I'm registered here at the hotel and I'll be at your service whenever you'll need me," and the doctor left the room.

"Did Truess live here alone?" Rading asked the house detective.

"Yes. That is, he had a valet here with him."

"What's his name?"

"I don't know."

"Find out his name, and learn why he isn't here now. The servants around here ought to be able to enlighten you on these matters."

The questions asked by Lornt, of course, spread the news of the murder. Although the hotel authorities would have desired greatly to suppress the matter and prevent its publication, the news of the calamity spread rapidly through the establishment. Half-truths, wild surmises, rumors of all sorts were rife, and groups soon began to congregate in the corridors and in the reading rooms to discuss the affair.

Stories concerning Truess's life were freely exchanged; about his wealth, his sportsmanship, his scandals. Possible motives for the murder and generalities about the character of the murderer were surmised by all.

Reporters of the morning papers soon came buzzing around in their quest for the news. They absorbed all sorts of tales about his past, present and future, to be rehashed and glared forth in the early morning editions. They besieged Rading, who was closeted in Truess's room with several other detectives from headquarters, for actual facts and probable hypothesis concerning the crime, but he refused absolutely to make any statement or volunteer any information. So these ferreters of tidings of New York's latest thrillers had to content themselves with wild rumors and photographs of a hotel to be emblazoned across a double-column in the morning papers with an "x" to indicate room where murder occurred.

Rading would permit nothing in the room to be touched, and although he and his fellow detectives searched the apartment zealously for a weapon that would inflict a narrow, flat wound, the search was fruitless. Hasty perusal of letters and notes of recent date revealed no indications of a motive for murder.

At about ten o'clok the headquarters men left dissatisfied and disgruntled with their unavailing examination.

Then Rading called Lornt into the room. He had been stationed outside to shoo off any over-zealous reporters and over-inquisitive guests of the hotel.

"Here, Lornt," he said. "The bulls have just gone over this place in search of some real clues and they haven't been able to do anything worth while. Want to try your hand at the investigation?"

Lornt was only too glad of the opportunity. He felt rather elated at the thought that this brusque detective felt sufficient appreciation of his real abilities in spite of the fact that he had previously been rather short and sarcastic with him.

"You know," said Lornt, "that no one knows what became of Truess's valet, Jones. He usually remains here in the evenings until Truess leaves; but today he hasn't been seen about at all."

Rading nodded. "It's quite possible that Truess sent him away because he wanted to see me in privacy."

Lornt turned his attention to the room. "You know," he said, "the first thing to do is to find the motive."

"Oh, I've heard something of that sort," said Rading with an inward grin at the gullibility of the detective before him, but outwardly his face remained calm and passive as he rolled his cigar from one side to the other of his mouth and chewed on it as he mused. "The coroner's inquest in the morning ought to bring the motive more clearly to light when

they examine his friends and relatives and his valet. Besides, I've already notified his sweetheart, Miss Nambeil, and his attorney, Mr. Warner. They're coming right over here. They ought to be here by the time you've finished your examination."

Lornt nodded. He could afford now to be smugly satisfied with himself, for hadn't he offered a bit of information that had seemingly not occurred to Rading before? So, painstakingly, and well assured of his abilities, he began his investigations.

He scrutinized the position of the dead man, smelled the glasses of whisky, examined the floor by the chairs for bits of dirt on the carpet, examined the cigarette butts, counted the matches, and so-forth. He looked carefully for a weapon that might have been used to inflict the wound, but found none.

Rading watched him narrowly all the time, but offered not a word of suggestion. At times he nodded his head in slight approval of what Lornt did; at other times a glint of sarcastic comment flashed through his eyes.

"Well," he said at length, "ready to report?"

"Yes," replied Lornt, rubbing his hands together reflectively, "and I think I can throw some light on the matter. These clues, you know, aren't really so very difficult to read providing you view them in relation to one another."

"Good. Let's hear your deductions. But wait a minute! I think——" and he went to the door and stood there listening. Hurried footsteps could be heard coming along the corridor.

Swiftly Rading went to the body of the dead man and laid beside it a small object. He arranged the dead man's coat so that it partly concealed the object.

"What's that?" queried Lornt, but Rading held up his hand to silence him.

There came a hurried rap on the door.

"I think our motive is arriving on the scene," said Rading, and he threw open the door.

There, framed in the doorway, stood Elene Nambeil, the reported sweetheart of the dead man; her brother, William Nambeil, and Frederick Warner, attorney.

CHAPTER THREE

ELENE was the type of beauty that instantly attracted attention, not so much because her loveliness was compelling as that she had about her an air of refinement and good-breeding. Her hair was warm brown; not the kind called golden, though when the sunshine played on it it was filled with color. Her eyes were blue, of the kind that turned gray when the emotion of anger flashed across them. Her skin was clear and indicative of athletic ruddiness rather than the ballroom's "milk-and-roses" charm.

In striking contrast to her live-eyed loveliness was her brother William, who stood beside her. Trim as her figure was in its semi-décolleté, just so negligent was he in his rumpled evening dress. His shirt-front was wrinkled, his collar was sweaty. Though younger than his sister, his face was furrowed with lines about the eyes. His hands were never steady, his gaze was always shifty and timorous. His attitude seemed one of constraint, of alertness against reproof from those about him.

Yet there were times when the pride in his lineage was aroused; when the aristocratic training he had received asserted itself, and then his spine stiffened and with it his mental attitude straightened up. Just now as he stood beside his sister he looked like the black sheep alongside of the lily-white lamb.

Frederick Warner, the attorney of the dead man, and also the constant friend and adviser of the Nambeils, was a man of about thirty; tall, clean, alert. He had been an artillery captain during the war, and this training had given his athletic figure a spruceness and a litheness that made him pleasant to look upon. As a criminal lawyer he was rated high in his profession despite his youth, and this training stood him in good stead now, for it enabled him to assume command of the situation as he stepped into the room.

"Hello, Rading!" he said to the detective. "It's been a long time since we've been interested in the same case."

"Right you are, Mr. Warner. Glad to be with you on this one—that is, if you're going to be in on it."

"I expect to; but more of that in a moment.

This is Miss Nambeil, and Mr. William Nambeil—Detective Rading. And this is?" he asked, nodding to Lornt.

"Mr. Lornt, detective of the hotel. Allow me"; and as graciously as he could Rading introduced Lornt to those gathered in the room.

"Where — where's Truess now?" asked William Nambeil.

From his position at the doorway the body of the dead man could not be seen, as it lay behind the table.

Rading indicated the position of the body with a nod of his head in that direction.

Elene and Warner stepped together over to the place. In silence they looked down at the body—at the pale face, the thick, sensuous lips wearing, even in death, an unpleasant leer.

Rading watched Elene keenly. "Takes it rather coolly for a reported sweetheart," he thought to himself as he saw how unemotionally she seemed to view the man whom she had known so intimately in life.

With a faint shudder and a sigh, Elene turned away. "He was young," she said at length. "Too young to die."

"He was old in sin," said William from his position at the door. He had sunk into a chair alongside of the door and from this he showed no inclination to stir.

"Hush, William," she said to him. "Let us not remember those things now. Wouldn't it be possible," she asked Rading, "to place him on the bed in the next room? It seems rather unfeeling and sacrilegious to let him lie here."

"Impossible, Miss Nambeil; not until the coroner views him. You see, the position of a murdered man often plays an important part in the solution of the identity of his murderer."

"His position?" echoed William.

Rading nodded. "You'll bear watching, young man," he said to himself as he eyed William narrowly, though presumably he was but gazing at the top of his unlighted cigar.

Warner ushered Elene to a comfortable morris chair whose position precluded a direct view of the outstretched body on the floor, and then he seated himself on the arm of the chair.

"Say, Rading," he asked, "have you any suspicion as to the culprit? I know it's too early to ask a question like that, but I'd like to be in on this case from the start. I'm Truess's executor, you know."

"I understand that," said Rading. "I'll let you know my theory, incomplete as it is, after Lornt here tells us what he has deduced. He has gone over the evidence and was about to explain his views when your arrival interrupted him. Let's hear your theory now, Lornt."

"Is it all right," asked Lornt, "before——" and he waved his hand suggestively at William and Elene.

"Oh, yes. Quite. Miss Nambeil is, or was, reported as the fiancée of Truess." There was a question in his voice as he said this, and though he glanced at Elene for corroboration or denial of the statement, she volunteered nothing beyond dropping her eyes under his searching gaze. "And William here," continued the detective, "was at one time a very devoted friend of Truess's, and, I believe, at one time greatly indebted to him for something or other."

"How do you know?" broke out William, half rising from his chair; but he collected himself almost immediately and sank back in silence.

Rading ignored his outburst and, turning to Lornt, said: "So you see, Lornt, your theory will be of vital interest to all concerned."

"Well," began Lornt, stepping to the table, "in the first place, I surveyed the general attitude of the room. There was nothing here to suggest violence—a struggle. Therefore I can well say that the group who had visited Truess were his friends, people whom he trusted. The chairs about the table would indicate a pleasant evening for a talk about business, informal, you know, or a chat about sports.

"Now then, who were the four people in this room; that is, the three besides Truess?

"We can gain no indication as to their identity from the cigarettes, for they are all of the same brand, and from the initials "J. T." on them, it is easy to see that Truess himself had handed his own brand of cigarettes around to the group.

"Truess was a well-known sportsman; the turf and the card-room frequently occupied

his attentions. Had there been cards strewn about here, I would have said that perhaps during a friendly game one of the men became angry at Truess and killed him. This would provide a motive for the killing. But as can be seen the quiet appearance of the room and the absence of evidence of gambling remove all question of this motive.

"Now, as far as can be learned, there was nothing stolen from the room. Therefore murder was not the motive, and that leaves out the possibility that the valet, Jones, is the guilty party. His absence, however, is peculiar, and should be looked into.

"We must therefore conclude that the murder of Truess was committed for personal reasons; one of jealousy or revenge or some such reason."

Rading, who was closely watching Elene, noticed that she shuddered at this last statement of Lornt's. Warner, also, who was intently listening to the explanation, noted the shudder, for almost mechanically he put his hand upon her arm as though to calm and reassure her. On the other side of the room, William was making a vain attempt at impassivity, for he moved restlessly about in his chair, or else tapped nervously on his knees with his fingers.

"Now," continued Lornt, "comes the question of the weapon which is closely allied to the question of the motive. The doctor who examined Truess said the wound was inflicted with a thin, flat blade about three or four inches long. This is not the type of weapon a man would use. He would prefer a heavy knife that would make an ugly wound but would be certain to do its work. This, of course, is not the absolute rule, but it is usually so.

"The position that Truess occupies is important, as Detective Rading has said. Truess was killed as he sat at his table. Had the murderer been a stranger, an intruder, such as a robber would have been, then Truess would not have remained seated in his chair; he would have advanced to meet the stranger, and the murder would have taken place, let us say, in the middle of the room—any place, but not while Truess was seated quietly in his chair.

"Summing up all these points, therefore, I believe that the murderer was known to Truess, as he did not leave his chair. Since the cigarettes and whisky glasses indicate that the visitors here were men, and as there is no violence indicated, I believe that the murderer came after they had left. As the motive was not robbery, but revenge or hate, and as the weapon is most likely of the type a woman would use, find the woman who wanted to secure revenge on Truess or who hated him and you will have the murderess!"

The first one to break the long silence that followed this explanation was William. He drew a long, deep breath and said: "That's most likely right. It was a woman who did it."

"I believe so, too," said Detective Rading as he gazed at his cigar. "Truess had phoned to me that he had been threatened by a hysterical woman. Do you know any such woman?" he asked quickly of William.

"No, no. I didn't concern myself with those affairs of his," he replied hastily, and though he tried to answer calmly his voice almost broke because of the repressed emotion that he was laboring to conceal.

"Warner," said Rading, "you are the *legal* counselor of the Nambeils. I'm asking you first, therefore, if you object to my asking these people a few questions?"

"Not at all," replied Warner, "provided they are willing to accept my advice to answer all questions freely. But frankly, Rading, I don't see what you're going to ask them and what you can gain thereby."

Rading did not deign to answer him, but coming over to where Elene sat, he stood directly in front of her.

"Miss Nambeil," he said, "were you home all this evening?"

"I won't have this!" interrupted William. "I won't have her questioned as though she were concerned in this affair."

"Come, come, William!" said Warner. "Don't fly off the handle that way. Let Rading ask his questions; it will clear any unjust suspicions that he has."

"You mistake me, Mr. Warner," said the detective. "I have no suspicions. I'm simply searching after truths. Miss Nambeil, you'll answer me, I'm sure. It's to your own benefit

to do so. Were you engaged to James Truess?"

For a brief second Elene paused. Then she answered softly: "Practically, yes."

"What do you mean by 'practically'?"

"I had agreed to marry him under certain conditions. Our engagement was not formally announced."

"What were those conditions?"

"I won't have this, I say!" broke in William, and he rushed from his chair to the side of Elene. "You can't third-degree her!"

"You'll keep quiet and out of this until I'm through," snapped Rading at him. His jaw was thrust forward at an unpleasant angle, and his eyes flared with anger.

Warner took William by the arm and led him back to his chair by the door. "You're making matters all the harder, Will," he said. "Give Mr. Rading a fair chance. It's for Elene's own protection that he's questioning her now."

Rading paid no attention to William once he was removed from his line of vision and turned to question Elene further.

"Now, Miss Nambeil, those conditions of which you spoke a moment ago—what were they?"

"I'd prefer not to say—now."

Rading did not press the point, but instead chewed on his cigar for a few moments.

"Did you want to marry Truess," he said at length, "or were you doing so for convenience?" There was an emphasis in his words that left no doubt as to what he was probing for. He didn't employ tact; he felt that he could secure his point equally as well by brusque, direct questions.

Elene raised her head proudly. She appreciated what the detective was seeking to do. She knew that he was alluding to the scandal that William had fallen into with Mrs. Norton, and which Truess had seemingly hushed, and she appreciated the directness of the detective's method. She preferred that to insinuating, suggestive questioning.

"Truess was an old friend of the family," she said in reply to the detective. "I knew him long, and though there were some qualities in him that I frankly did not admire, still he was a man of good birth and gentlemanly instincts."

"You're trying to conceal the answer by beautiful platitudes, Miss Nambeil," interrupted Rading. "No woman marries a man because he has the instincts of a gentleman and not the actions of one."

"You have no right to probe into her life," cried William, despite Warner's efforts to restrain him. "She was engaged to Truess; that's enough for you to know."

Rading came close to the young man and thrust his face close to William's.

Warner knew enough of the detective's methods to realize what was coming, and he gladly would have avoided the scene for Elene's sake, but there was no gainsaying it now.

Elene had too active a mind, too ready an intelligence to be caught in an easy trap, and so the detective was reverting his attention to William, who in his present irritable condition would prove an easy victim for a grueling third degree.

The lad cowered under Rading's steady glare.

"You remember Mrs. Norton!" snapped Rading. "Truess got you into that scandal, didn't he?" There was no reply from William. "What did you have to pay him to get you out of it?"

"I didn't — didn't have to pay him — anything," replied William weakly.

"Right after that affair there came rumors of Truess's engagement to your sister." Rading was guessing wildly here. He had no definite knowledge of such facts.

"No, no; there's no relation between these matters!" cried the young man in protest.

"I never said there was," snapped Rading. "What makes you suggest a connection between the episodes?"

"I thought you——" began William weakly.

"Well, I didn't. But now that you mention it——" Rading paused significantly. For a few moments he said nothing, but continued to gaze in reflection on William. He was letting the young man's thoughts run riot with him.

Elene had her little fists clenched in anger at Rading's methods with her brother, but she knew that sooner or later both William and she would have to undergo some such grueling investigation, and they might just as well

learn to bear it now. Warner's hand gripped hers tightly in his effort to quiet her aroused nerves.

Rading took his cigar from the corner of his mouth, looked at the end of it, and then started to put it back in his mouth. But when it was half-way up he thrust it viciously forth at William.

"By Truess's death you're free and your sister doesn't have to marry a man whom she hates!"

Instead of cringing under this sudden remark, as Rading had expected him to do, the opposite effect occurred in William. He grasped the arm of his chair tightly and sat upright.

"You can't—you can't accuse——" he began slowly but in firm accents.

"Never mind what I can't do," barked Rading. Then in a soothing tone he continued: "Let me see you look into the face of Truess. Can you do it?"

William took a deep breath and rose from his chair. "I can," he said. He looked over at Elene and she nodded her head to him in encouragement.

Slowly he walked over to the side of the dead man and looked down at him. The rays of the lamp fell clear on the red spot that was beginning to harden and turn darker.

Rading seemed to have lost all concern in William as he stood there. Although he had seemingly sent the lad over to face the dead man as a crucial test, yet now the detective turned his back on him and, walking over to Lornt, engaged himself in conversing in low tones with his fellow detective.

William looked long and silently down at the dead man. In spite of a life of excesses and recklessness, Truess had always preserved the air and mien of a well-bred gentleman. Presumably to examine him at closer range, William bent one knee and kneeled beside the body. His eyes narrowed as he looked at the thin slit in the shirt-front that had quenched the fire of life and had covered a tempestuous career in a veil of quiet.

As he reflected there, Warner left the side of Elene and wandered about the room. With great curiosity he examined the various objects in the room that had led Lornt to draw such definite conclusions as to the identity of the guilty party. He peered into the glasses intently and examined the cigarette butts on the ashtray. At one moment he was on the point of crying something out to Rading, but he restrained himself and continued to look about the room. He stood for a moment beside William as the lad knelt alongside of the dead man's body and then he returned to his position beside Elene. She noticed the sense of elation in his face and asked him what it was, but he shook his head in the negative and offered no reply.

As William rose he uttered a sigh, not so much of sorrow, but rather of pensive reflection on the significance of death which was thrust upon him so early in life, and partly of satisfaction that death had come to the man who had almost ruined his happiness.

Hands in his pockets, he strode over to where Elene sat beside Warner.

Rading turned to him.

"Well," he said, "you were able to look at him."

"Of course; did you think I was afraid to because you thought I had killed him?"

Rading glanced over to the side of the dead man.

"No," he replied, "I wasn't sure that you had done it; but I am sure now that you know who did do it!"

"Why, what do you mean?"

Rading strode over to William and grasped his hands at the wrists. Slowly he drew William's hands from out his pockets.

"Don't drop it!" he commanded.

Both of the young man's hands were clenched. At Rading's command he slowly opened his fists.

There, in the palm of his right hand, lay a small locket, triangular-shaped, with a small diamond in the center.

"Where did you get that?" demanded Rading.

"I—I——"

"You picked it up from beside his body!"

Lornt started in surprise. He recollected seeing no such object beside Truess when he had made his examination. Then he remembered the object that Rading had taken from one of the drawers and laid down beside the body just before he had admitted these people into the room.

"No, no!" protested William.

"What is it?" inquired Elene. From where she sat she could not see into the palm of her brother's hand. Rading turned William's wrist until the palm faced her. At sight of the locket Elene gasped and sank back into her chair.

Rading took the locket from William's hot, feverish hand.

"Whose is it," he demanded, "that you were trying to hide it?"

"I don't know! I tell you I don't know!" William's self-possession was all gone now.

"Well, I know, if you don't!" retorted Rading as he turned the locket over. "The initials on the back are 'E. N.'—Elene Nambeil!"

"No!" cried William. "She didn't do it! I did it! I did it! I hated him. He was forcing me——"

"Stop!" interrupted Warner. "This is all nonsense. Neither of these people——"

"All right," calmly interposed Rading. "That's all right. Nevertheless he confesses!"

"It's a lie!" cried Elene, rising from her chair. "He didn't kill him. He's trying to protect me, for it was I—I that killed James Truess!"

CHAPTER FOUR

"ELENE!" cried Warner in horror.

"Yes," she cried rather hysterically, "I killed him."

"No! Don't say that, sister!" pleaded William. But she put her hand upon his arm and said in a quieter tone: "I came here this evening. He had a party of friends here. They left and I begged Truess not to force me into that marriage with him, and not to try to ruin William. I may as well confess it, he held enough material over William to ruin his life, and it was on condition that he suppress it that I consented to marry him. He laughed at my trying to beg off. He said he loved me; had loved me long and it didn't matter that I didn't love him; he'd make me—after I was his. As he sat there in his chair laughing at me I stabbed him."

"Ah!" cried Lornt exultingly. "It's just as I said."

"Hold on!" cried Warner. "That's not so! She's lying to try to conceal some one. She never did it!"

"No. She didn't!" shouted William.

"Keep quiet, every one!" Rading took command of the scene. His voice was not loud, but there was a ring to it that brooked no alternative but immediate obedience.

He waited until the tenseness of the situation caused by Elene's confession had died down and then he continued: "I'm not so certain myself that Miss Nambeil's story is untrue. There was motive enough to warrant such a deed. Truess had her and young Nambeil badly entangled. To free herself and him she'd almost do anything——"

"Almost anything," interrupted Warner, "but not——"

Rading raised his hand to silence him.

"We have the motive," continued Rading, "and we have her explanation of the manner in which she committed the killing."

"But she didn't do it," cried William, "because—because——" He paused.

"Because why?" burst out Rading; but before William could reply Warner interrupted again.

"If you please, Rading," he said. "If you'll let me explain a few things I think I can tell satisfactorily why I know Miss Nambeil had nothing to do with the killing. I've had some experience in crime solution and so on, as you well know, and I believe I can throw a little light on this case."

"All right," said Rading. "Let's hear what you have to offer."

The little group reseated itself and Warner took up his position by the table. On one side sat Elene, rumpled handkerchief in her hand, but her face wearing a look of quiet determination. Beside her stood her brother, dejected, irresolute, fearing. On the side by the door sat the two detectives, Lornt exultant, Rading quiet, yet suggesting in his attitude keen alertness.

"Now," said Warner, "I've looked at the various objects in the room, as Lornt has done, and whereas he has found in them indications of a gathering between good-natured friends, I have found them indicative of nothing but a cheap hoax!"

"Hoax!" echoed Lornt.

"Yes, hoax. I don't for a moment feel that they have deceived you, Rading. I know your ability better than that. Just what your game is to seem apparently taken in by them I don't know, but your reason must be a good one."

Rading offered no acceptance or denial of the statement, but continued to direct his attention as usual to his cigar.

"These glasses of liquor," continued Warner. "That's an old trick. They haven't been drunk from. Some one has placed a little whisky in the bottom of these four glasses in order to make it appear as if they had been drained. Actually, none of the glasses have been touched."

"How do you know?" gasped Lornt in amazement.

"Simple enough. There's not a drop of whisky on the sides of the glasses; there is not a sticky trace of lips on their rims. Therefore no mouth has drained them."

"But the four——?" questioned Lornt.

"The four of them are but a ruse to make it seem as though that many people were present in this room. Actually this is the work of one person!"

There was silence for a moment as the unexpectedness of this observation sank into the minds of the listeners.

"And the cigarettes?" suggested Rading.

"I'll come to them in a minute; I'm not finished with these glasses yet. In addition to what I've said you will notice that there are no water tumblers present. Now, there are many people who take their whisky straight, but surely it is but natural to suppose that among four people at least one would take a chaser after his whisky. This is but a probability, I know, but still it serves to strengthen my previous statement."

A low grunt from Rading was the only comment offered.

"Now the cigarettes," continued Warner. "There are four stubs here. Two of these have the trade-mark on the ends, the other two are not marked at all. Doesn't it seem peculiar that two people should have smoked their cigarette correctly, trade-mark end in mouth, while two others should have lit the trade-mark end? Most men are careful to light the correct end, for then the cigarette draws better.

"This leads me to suppose that some one, this same one party, cut two cigarettes in half, smoked the pieces and then deposited them about the table.

"I am further led to this conclusion by the fact that there are four matchsticks here. When a man lights a cigarette in company he always offers his neighbor a light. That's an elementary rule of smoker's courtesy. Had this rule been followed there would have been but two matches used. The presence of four matches leads me to suppose that this one person lit the halves of the cigarettes one after the other and so required four matches."

William's eyes were wide open in what was either fear or wonder as he gazed upon Warner and listened to the explanation of these trifles which assumed such important signification.

"Next comes the question of the position of the murdered man. Here is what puzzles me: You, Rading, will no doubt be able to explain the matter. As you have all seen, Truess is lying on his back. I don't myself see how, if he were stabbed as he sat in his chair, he would have fallen on his back. If death were instantaneous he would have crumpled up in his chair and then slid down out of it. He therefore would have fallen upon his face. Yet here he lies, outstretched, face up. I am therefore forced to conclude that he was not sitting in his chair when he was killed, but was placed here by whoever killed him. Don't you think so, Rading?"

"We'll go into that point in a moment," replied the detective. "That's very fine work, Warner. Miss Nambeil," he said to her as she sat twisting and untwisting her handkerchief, "you said you killed Truess. Were you wearing your locket at the time?"

"Yes," she said slowly. "He—he must have pulled it off my chain."

"Hmm," returned Rading. "Very good, but for one slight point. The locket was not originally alongside Truess. I found it in his desk, and when I saw the initials I thought it might be yours. I placed it beside him. Your brother saw it there and picked it up when he thought no one saw him. His reason is self-explanatory."

Elene said nothing, but lowered her head.

She had made a brave attempt to incriminate herself in order to save some one.

Whom was she trying to shield?

In the silence that ensued came the mellow chimes of some neighboring church bells tolling the hour of twelve.

"Midnight," said Rading. "We'll have to excuse you now, Miss Nambeil, and you, too, Nambeil. You'll report here in the morning for the coroner's inquest."

"If you want us," replied Elene.

"At ten o'clock, if you please," said Rading.

Elene nodded, and placing her arm through her brother's she walked slowly to the door.

"Are you coming, Mr. Warner?" she asked.

"No," he replied. "I'll stay here with Rading to talk things over. I'll call for you in the morning."

With a quiet "good-night" to all, Elene left with her brother.

"I guess—I guess you won't need me—any more—tonight," faltered Lornt.

"No, I guess not," returned Rading callously.

Lornt left, his egotism quite wilted now. After the showing-up the young attorney had given him he was only too eager to retire.

"Well done, Warner," said Rading, when the two were alone. "Very cleverly handled, with one exception."

"And that is?"

"The position of Truess's body. Had you observed his legs carefully you would have had a solution to that question. You will notice that his left leg is crossed over his right one. As he sat in his chair his left foot was placed in advance of his right. He was stabbed and fell forward out of his chair onto his knees. Then, because of the fact that his weight was on his right side, due to the advanced position of his left leg, he turned and fell on his right side and then rolled over on his back. This kept his feet crossed as you see them."

"There's one thing more," suggested Warner. "What was the weapon?"

"When I find that, I'll have the culprit."

"And the motive?"

"There's enough in Truess's life to furnish motives for half a dozen killings. Miss Nambeil has one——"

"But she didn't do it!"

"And young Nambeil has another; and, with your help, there's the one we're going to track down first."

CHAPTER FIVE

FOR a few minutes neither man spoke; each was occupied with his own thoughts.

At last Rading broke the silence: "Truess must have left a considerable lot of money. You drew up his will, didn't you?"

"Yes; there's a lot to be distributed. Of course I can't divulge the contents of the will until after the burial, but perhaps when it is read you will be able to find some connection between its contents and this murder."

"Perhaps."

A silence of several more minutes ensued. Warner stood near the body, gazing down at it as though he could not yet fully realize that the breath of life had been snuffed out of it; Rading sat off in a corner of the room chewing his omnipresent unlit cigar.

"Say, Warner," he said presently, "I'd like to ruminate over this affair. I do my best thinking in the dark because then exterior objects can't crowd themselves in on my mind and disturb the train of my thought, so I'm going to turn off the lights in here. You can either go home or down in the lobby or anywhere you wish. Or you can stay here if you like."

"I'd prefer the latter. I'd like to do some tall thinking myself." And Warner strode over to the door and switched off the lights. He seated himself in the arm-chair just recently vacated by Elene, which was near Rading's chair, and deliberated on the swift current of the events of the last few hours.

For fully half an hour Rading said nothing. Warner could occasionally hear him as he changed the position of his cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other, but for this slight exception nothing disturbed the silence of the room, which was as the silence of the dead.

The sound of the church bell's soft, musical, peaceful chime of one had hardlly died away when along the corridor came faint sounds—

the tip-tap of stealthy footsteps on the marble floor.

Warner was about to say something in comment of this cautious approach and, although Rading could not see him in the darkness of the room, he must have sensed what Warner was going to do for he uttered a soft "Ssh!" of warning.

The footsteps tiptoed nearer and paused outside the door.

A key was carefully inserted into the lock; the latch was turned back. There was a pause. Then slowly, quietly, the knob of the door was turned and the door opened slightly.

Warner and Rading sat grasping the arms of their chairs, almost ceasing to breathe for fear of frightening off this stealthy intruder.

The door was opened just sufficiently wide to admit the body of this person; the door was closed again. Through the darkness of the room came the sound of labored breathing.

There was a click! The lights were switched on, and there, against the door, stood a man clad in evening dress!

As his eyes fell on the two men seated in the room his face paled, his eyes opened wide in fear; he uttered a gasp of terror. In a trice he had reopened the door and was flying down the corridor.

Simultaneously with the click of the switch that had lighted the room Rading had risen from his chair to apprehend the man, but the intruder had fled with the swiftness of a startled panther.

"After him!" cried the detective, and he and Warner gave pursuit down the corridor.

The stranger ran up the stairs, followed closely by Rading. Warner, leaving this chase to him, very shrewdly rushed to the elevator and went to the first floor. Here he took a position that commanded a view of the elevators and the stairs. If the pursued man succeeded in eluding Rading he would have to encounter Warner as he tried to leave the building.

Owing to the lateness of the hour the lobby of the hotel was deserted with the exception of a few nighthawks who occasionally drifted in from a night of gayety and revel.

Suddenly the elevator door opened with a clang and the stranger in evening dress dashed forth from it.

Warner rushed forward to intercept him. The man sidestepped his approach, threw a foot in back of Warner and with a sudden shove on the attorney's chest sent him sprawling to the floor. By the time Warner rose and dashed along the lobby in pursuit the man was outside sprinting along the street.

Warner followed; but the man sprang into a taxi that was drawn up by the curb and sped away. The lawyer looked about for a taxi in which to give chase, but the street was bare of them. A few limousines drove leisurely by, but they paid no attention to the shouts of the bareheaded man who waved desperately to them: he seemed either drunk or crazy.

Crestfallen at his defeat, Warner retraced his steps to the hotel. In the lobby he met Rading.

"Well?" asked the detective.

Warner shook his head mournfully. "How did he get away from you?" he asked.

"He rushed up two flights of stairs into an elevator that fortunately for him was there and forced the elevator man to take him down."

"Why didn't the elevator man——"

"Wait! With a revolver pressed against your ribs you'd do as you were told to, if you were in the elevator lad's place. How did he get away from you?"

"I'm ashamed to tell you; it was such a simple trick he played on me. Instead of waiting for him to come up to me, I went for him. He got me off my equilibrium and tripped me. Outside, he hopped into a taxi and off he went."

"What kind of a taxi?"

"Pullman. The kind that's stationed at the hotel."

"Could you see its number?"

"No, it was too far away, and too dark up there."

"Well, that's no cause for worry. If the machine has its stand here at the hotel I'll find out in the morning which car was on duty at this hour, and then I'll find from the chauffeur where he went."

Together they returned to Truess's suite.

"You know who that fellow is, don't you?" asked Warner.

"I've never seen him before."

"I thought you knew," replied Warner. "That's Jones, Truess's valet."

"Ho, ho! So that's the chap, eh?" commented the detective slowly. "Comes in cautiously; carries a gun; runs away when he see us. Hmmm!"

The detective searched his pockets for a cigar to take the place of the one he had lost in the pursuit.

"How long has he been with Truess, do you know?" he asked.

"Oh, about a year or two, I should say. Seemed a steady, dependable sort of chap."

"Englishman?"

"No; an American. Truess found him somewhere, a down-and-outer, and put him on his feet again. Made him his valet and, I believe, a sort of confidant."

"I see. Say, Warner, got a cigar? I'm all out."

Silently Warner handed him one. The detective smelled it carefully and, satisfied with the brand, began to chew on it with a sigh of contentment.

"Aren't you going to get any sleep?" asked Warner.

"Oh, I don't need any, now that I've got this cigar. But you'd better get some rest, especially if you're going to escort Miss Nambeil here tomorrow for the inquest."

"Yes, I guess I will turn in. Had enough strenuous living for one night. See you in the morning then, Rading. Good-night."

"Night," replied the detective, and as Warner left he settled himself comfortably in a chair preparatory to spending the remainder of the night deliberating on the intricate problem before him.

The coroner's inquest brought forth very little that was new or conclusive to the detective.

The doctor who had examined Truess, some of the elevator men, the maid, the man who occupied the neighboring suite, were all intently examined, but their testimony brought nothing startlingly vital to light.

Warner, Elene and William were also questioned and, although they could testify much concerning Truess's past life, they could present nothing but generalities, nothing that could be definitely applied to the murder.

A summary of the case against the three people who were mostly under suspicion would be as follows:

First: The valet, Jones. The testimony of the maid with whom he had chummed a bit disclosed that his past was always kept a dead blank to all who knew him. It was well known that Truess had found him a derelict and, for some whim or other, had taken a fancy to the man. As the months progressed they became rather intimate. Jones often flashed large sums of money around the hotel which he claimed the "boss" had given him for "pulling off a neat job." Just what these jobs were the maid could not tell.

It was very seldom that he was not in attendance on Truess and his absence on the evening of the murder was worthy of note.

The gentleman who occupied the neighboring suite to Truess, an architect of considerable reputation, had heard the master and his man quarreling early on the morning of the murder. The purport of their words he could not grasp, but their tones were sharp and bitter. He usually took no note of the proceedings in the hotel, but this instance of unseeming familiarity between a gentleman and his servant had struck him forcibly.

To all this Rading added the fact that Jones had paid a furtive visit back to the suite after midnight and had fled to avoid apprehension.

Second: The case against William Nambeil. It was well known that he and Truess had been very familiar. Despite his sister's objections he had associated with the sportsman in what proved to be rather shady social affairs and the climax of these had led to an intrigue between the young man and a rather notorious adventuress, a Mrs. Norton, to whom Truess had introduced him. It was only due to the personal influence of Truess that the affair was hushed up in the papers and that Mrs. Norton left for the Continent "for her health."

The price that he had paid for this silence William refused to divulge at the inquest. Truess's character was too well known for it to be believed that he had acted only according to the promptings of good-nature.

William admitted that he had visited Truess in his apartment on the evening of the murder, but he only did so after one of the

elevator boys testified that he had seen William enter Truess's rooms. The reason for this visit and its outcome he persistently refused to discuss, even when warned by the coroner that this refusal looked unpleasantly suspicious.

To this testimony Rading added the fact that Elene Nambeil had tried to shield some one whose guilt she suspected, and she would only do this for some one who was dear to her. This, coupled with William's peculiar actions in the room with the murdered man, made the case look rather dark for the young man.

Third: Elene Nambeil. She had, it was true, invented a wholly fictitious story of how she had killed Truess. Warner's interpretation of the clues in the room had shown the falsity of her tale, but still it had to be considered that she had strong reasons for desiring the death of Truess. Undoubtedly she had agreed to give herself to him as the "price" for her brother's release from the Norton affair. It was certain that if her hand had not held the weapon she knew whose had. Credence was given to this belief by the fact that Truess had phoned Rading that it was some woman or other whose fury he feared.

Then there was the "fourthly" in the case: that of some unknown man or woman who had strong reason to do away with Truess. Was it a near relation who would profit financially by his death? Was it an infuriated man or woman seeking to avoid a career's tragedy, or to revenge a tragedy already culminated?

The coroner's verdict was the usual blanket one that covered a multitude of cases and touched none—"a violent death at the hands of some person or persons unknown."

CHAPTER SIX

EARLY the next morning after the inquest Warner received two noted visitors at his office.

He had hardly arrived there when it was announced to him that Elene was in the outer office. It was with a decided thrill of expectancy and pleasure that Warner hastened to usher her personally into his private office. "What in the world brings you here, Elene?" he asked.

"That's hardly a courteous reception," she replied banteringly.

"I'm serious. Of course I'm always delighted to see you, as you well know, but this visit is so unexpected that I'm curious to learn the reason for it."

"Since you're so desirous of getting to business at once, I may as well return your directness in kind. I want you to do me a favor."

"Heartily. What is it?"

"I want you to do it without asking questions either before or after."

"Hmm! That sounds terribly mysterious." He laughed lightly.

"It is very serious; so serious that I felt there was no one I could trust to do this for me but you."

"I appreciate that compliment, Elene. I always want you to feel that I'm ever ready to serve you."

"Thank you. I do hope you won't think I'm presumptuous in this. It's simply as I said, the matter is of such great import that I needed a true and trusting friend to do it for me, and that kind of friend I believe I have in you."

"What is it I'm to do, Elene?"

She was quiet, hesitant about opening the actual matter to him. Warner could see that in spite of her calmness of tone she was laboring under considerable stress of emotion. Her jaw was set determinedly and in her eyes, steely gray now, there glinted a light betokening resolution and inflexibility of purpose.

She looked glorious as she sat opposite to him at his desk, clad in a tailored suit of blue that set off to best advantage her well-rounded athletic form and the high color of her out-of-doors type of complexion.

"It's this, Fred," she said at length. "I want you to go to this address for me." From her handbag she took a card on which was written the address of a place down in the Battery end of New York. "The neighborhood, as you can see, is rather questionable. That's one of the reasons why I can't go there myself. Here you will meet a man who will most likely have his face masked. He will

give you a package, a folder most likely, that will contain some letters. Look into this folder and be certain that it contains letters. Then give him in exchange this envelope."

She drew forth a large envelope whose contents quite filled it and made it rather bulky.

"Don't give him this, I must repeat, until you get the package first."

Warner took the envelope. Its contents rustled as he turned it over in his hands.

"Money—bills?" he asked.

"Don't ask questions, please. Make all the surmises you want to, they'll most likely be correct; but don't ask me either to corroborate or to contradict them."

"All right, then. At what time shall I go there?"

"At ten to-night; ten o'clock sharp. Ask no questions there; everything will be understood."

Warner nodded his head slowly and let his gaze wander from the envelope which he held in one hand to the address in his other hand. Elene either misunderstood this seeming hesitancy on his part or else found it to her purpose to test him further, for she cried: "If you don't want to do this since it seems rather like a shady proposition and you're afraid that your reputation will suffer by it, you needn't——"

"Elene," he interrupted her, "don't say that. You know well enough——" He stopped. His legal training came to the fore and enabled him to exercise control over himself. He rose to his feet and, bowing slightly to her, said in an impressive tone: "I'll be there at ten to-night and will carry out this matter to the best of my ability."

"Thank you," Elene said, and, rising, she gave him her hand. He took it very gravely and bowed respectfully over it.

Then chatting gayly over trifles he ushered her to the elevator and saw her depart from the building.

After she had left the room seemed cheerless. He sat there, surrounded by his law books, and gazed at the bulky envelope and the address lying on his desk. He was half tempted to open the envelope and make certain of its contents, but then he realized that would not be playing the game square, and so with a sigh he placed the envelope and the card with the address into the inside pocket of his coat.

He tried again to return to the perusal of his legal tomes, but the strange mission he was to perform that night drove interest in all other matters from his head.

He was in this day-dreaming mood when Detective Rading was announced.

Warner was confessedly glad to see the detective, for he desired greatly to learn of the recent developments in the quest for the murderer of Truess.

"Nothing much," replied Rading in response to the query put to him by Warner, "except that I've learned where the valet, Jones, went after he made his getaway."

"Good!" cried Warner. "That may lead us on to something important. How did you do it?"

"As I told you I would, I found out who drove the taxi that Jones escaped in. It was a very clever little Irishman, shrewd as they make them. He suspected something was wrong when Jones accosted him in such a hurry, but he didn't either see or hear you. He drove Jones to Stanton street. There Jones paid him and walked away. It seemed peculiar to the driver that a fare should walk after having been driven in a machine, so he shrewdly left his taxi and followed Jones. He was still more certain when he saw Jones double on his track, walk completely around the block and then enter a house on Eldridge street. The chauffeur wrote down the address and when questioned produced it."

"Rather clever, I'll say. Have you arrested the valet?"

"No. You see, I have nothing against him yet. Of course he's wanted on suspicion, but I've given him a day's free rein in order to see what he'll do. He may be working for some one higher up."

"But he'll get away on you!"

"Say, Warner," said the detective in tones of deep disgust, "do you think this is my first year on the force? I've got two men on the job watching that house. If Jones ever leaves it, one will follow him if it's to the world's end; the other will continue to watch the house."

"Has he left as yet?"

"No."

"What's your next move?"

"To-night I'll arrest Jones. It'll be hard to get into the house, I know that. It's an old gambling den, and the doors and windows are steel fortified. But I know how to force an entrance into it."

"And where do I come in?"

"I want to know if you'll come with me to-night. That's why I came over."

"You bet."

"It'll be rather a risky game," cautioned the detective. "You'll need a revolver and the nerve to shoot it, if necessary."

"I'll bring both with me." Warner opened a drawer of his desk and drew forth an automatic—one of small bore, but still effective at close range. "I can use this fairly accurately," he said.

Rading took the gun and examined it rather scornfully.

"More of a lady's toy than a man's weapon," he said. "But I guess it'll do." In comparison with his own Colt automatic, which he produced—heavy, compact, wicked-looking—Warner's revolver did look rather a trifling affair.

"What time shall I meet you?" asked Warner.

"At eight to-night. That is, providing Jones is in. If he ventures out of the house to-night I'll have to get him alone and I'll call you up at your home."

"All right. And where shall I meet you?"

"Right opposite Jones's house. There's a little alley there and you can slip right into that."

Rading drew a slip of paper from his pocket on which was written an address.

"Give me a sheet of paper," he said, "and I'll write this address down for you."

Warner tossed him an envelope that was lying loose on the desk. Rading copied the address on it and handed it to Warner.

"All right," said the detective, rising and reaching under his chair for his hat, "I'll expect you there at eight to-night." And without further ado he left.

Warner was a little troubled in mind. Eight o'clock was rather an inconvenient hour as it left him but two hours in which to get to the place Elene had wished him to visit and accomplish that strange transfer of packages for her. However, he did not believe that this matter of capturing Jones would consume much time; they knew where he was and it was simply a matter of taking him. After the arrest he would hurry over to the place Elene wished him to go to, and he believed he could be there on time, especially if the two places happened to be situated near each other.

He glanced down at the address which the detective had given him. His eyes opened in amazement. He quickly drew forth the addressed card Elene had given him and compared the addresses. A cry of perplexity escaped his lips.

The two addresses were of the very same house!

CHAPTER SEVEN

ALL afternoon the sky had given strong indications of a gathering storm. Clouds at first fleecy-white and then ominously black began to lower, and the breeze which had blown delightfully cool began to carry a tang of moisture and the promise of increased velocity.

As Warner had received no further message from Detective Rading, he assumed that Jones was still hiding in the Eldridge street house, and so promptly at eight o'clock he had entered that disreputable street off lower Broadway. Once a fashionable quarter, it had degenerated until it now was a hive infested by the lower classes of humanity. The once stately houses, three-story brownstone affairs most of them, were now squalid tenement houses, their fire-escapes littered with the family wash, and on hot nights with the families themselves.

On the stoops were congregated men, rugged and worn, and women, weary and worn. The general impression one received on entering this section was of tired humanity, beaten by toil and sullen as it stood framed in the background of what formerly represented refinement and prosperity.

Innumerable children, ragged, unappreciately foul-mouthed, played in the streets in the blinking light of the electric lights. The gathering storm meant nothing to them; they had

no fine clothes to be ruined by its fury; its wet would afford them an unexpected; uncustomary bath, that was all.

Warner picked his way along the street, dodging whirlwinds of children intent on "hide-and-seek" and "prisoners' base." He had no trouble to locate the house in which Jones was located, for, unlike its well-populated neighbors, this house represented a forlorn and abject appearance. Its shutters were tightly closed, the steps were void of occupants.

Opposite it was a narrow, dark alley that led to a small court. The rays of the electric light along the street seemed only to heighten the darkness of the passageway, and as Warner stepped into it he blinked his eyes several times before he could peer through the darkness. Then he became aware of the presence of another occupant in the alley.

"That you, Warner?" came a voice through the gloom.

"Yes. Rading?"

Detective Rading stepped over to where Warner was.

"He's in there, all right," he said. "He left once this afternoon, but he seemed to suspect that he was being followed, for he constantly peered over his shoulder. Then he finally gave up his intended errand, whatever it was, and returned to the house."

"Is there anybody else in the house?"

"No one as far as we know—until about half an hour ago."

"Do you know who this visitor is?"

Rading hesitated before he replied. He seemed to be deliberating whether or not to disclose the identity of the visitor to Warner, but finally he said slowly: "Will Nambeil."

"Nambeil?" echoed Warner in astonishment. "What business has he with Jones? That looks——" He paused, refusing to express the thought that forced itself upon him.

"Yes," finished Rading for him, "that looks bad. About half an hour ago he drove up in his car. That's the machine standing over there by the electric light."

Warner reflected for a moment.

"Has he come out yet?" he asked.

"No."

"Are you going to wait until he comes out before you go in after Jones?"

"We'll wait a little while longer. If he's still in there we'll go in and perhaps make a double haul. That's a little contrary to my plans, though."

"Surely, Rading, you don't think he's——"

"Warner, you ought to know well enough that I don't think about those things; I prefer to withhold judgment until I know."

In the dark Warner nodded his head slowly. Affairs were certainly becoming complicated; surprise after surprise was rushing in, forcing one to change and remodel his opinions despite a desire to retain an original faith.

Shoulder to shoulder the two men stood in the darkened alleyway gazing across the street at the house whose closed windows seemed like seared eyeballs, and behind whose barricaded doors some problem was awaiting solution.

Warner tried to solve it by wondering what relationship existed between this man Jones and the enigmatical man, most likely masked, with whom he was to exchange obscure packages at ten o'clock that night. He wondered what connection there was between William Nambeil, his visit to Jones and the man in the mask. And how, above all, was Elene implicated in this matter?

Little children at play rushed by the two men as they stood there, for the most part unaware or unconcerned in their presence; toil-torn men plodded heavy-footedly by; shrilly-chattering women, affecting ease of social manner, minced past them.

Suddenly Rading's arm shot out and he collared a man who was walking slowly along the street and dragged him precipitously into the alley — a disreputable looking individual, unshaven, hollow-eyed, rough felt hat pulled down over his shaggy hair.

"You big idiot!" hissed Rading to the surprised captive.

"Who are you?" cried this individual.

Warner stared at him in surprise. The voice was Lornt's; Lornt, the dapper detective of the Hotel Benson. What was he doing here and in this guise?

"This is Rading," said the detective. "What's the grand idea of your parading by here in that country detective's makeup? Where did you learn that art; some handbook on how to be a detective for ten cents?"

Lornt threw off his hat and smoothed his hair back. He was utterly disgusted at his detection; he had considered the disguise unfailing in its deceptive qualities.

"Oh, well," he said in mournful tones, "I learned to-day from the chauffeur that Jones was located at that house over the way and I wanted to make good for my last blunder. So I came here to watch him. I thought this costume was appropriate."

"It might be appropriate," scorned Rading in a dry tone, "but it certainly was not deceptive. Any one could recognize you at once, and if Jones ever saw you parading before the house, good-night! It would have been all off for us!"

Lornt said nothing in reply, but Rading appreciated that his sarcasm had reached home. After all, the spirit that had prompted the house detective to act thus was a laudable one—he had desired to make good, to rectify in part his previous display of poor judgment. So Rading said in more cheering tones to him:

"All right, Lornt, you meant well, anyway, and while you're here you can help us considerable if you will."

"How?" asked Lornt eagerly.

"In the first place, don't snoop along in the fashion you've been doing; it fools no one, and in fact only advertises to all these chaps around here that a "bull" is parading around. Next, get us a taxi, a fast one. Make sure that the driver has nerve and plenty of it."

"Why," exclaimed Warner, "you don't expect to have to chase him, do you?"

"Never hurts to be prepared, Warner. If either of the men escape in that machine over there we should be prepared to follow. Besides, we'll need the machine to take Jones to police headquarters. You're commissioned then, Lornt, to get a taxi and wait with it on the corner. Keep your eyes and ears peeled for us. We're going into the house, and if we don't come out in a reasonable length of time, say an hour or so, call up headquarters and have the police batter down the doors to get what's left of us."

Lornt grunted by way of reply. He felt rather glad that he was not asked to accompany the men into the house. Under the circumstances he preferred to be on the outside waiting rather than inside running the chance of having the police come in and "get what's left."

"I understand," he said, and stepping out of the passageway, hurried off on his mission.

Rading laughed softly after him.

"I knew he'd prefer to do that job to coming inside with us," he said.

"Do you really believe it is so dangerous?" asked Warner.

"Scared?" taunted the detective.

"You know better than that. I was only asking in order to know what to expect."

"Well, expect the worst and then you'll surely not be disappointed, as the pessimist says."

"I understand," replied Warner. "Now, what's the plan of action?"

"Here it is," said the detective. "We'll never be able to get in through the front door. They'll never open it on any ruse whatsoever. I'm going to get in by way of the third story from the house next door. I know the layout of the place and I can do it. Then I'll come down and open the front door for you."

"But if he sees you——"

"What I said to Lornt holds good for you. If I'm not out in half an hour, get the police and save what remains of me."

"Don't jest," urged Warner. "I'll wait on the front step for you, then."

"Right. But you needn't get there for about twenty minutes; it'll take me that long to get in."

The two men shook hands gravely.

Rading threw away his cigar, which was now a pulpy, misshapen mass, and started chewing on a new one—a new adventure warranted a new cigar. With a cursory nod to Warner, he crossed the street and entered the house to the right of the one occupied by Jones and his visitor, William Nambeil.

The hallway of the house was dark, foul-smelling, poorly lighted. Rading picked his way up the rickety stairs until he reached the top floor. There he stood upon the banister rail, pushed open the trapdoor leading to the roof and, grasping the ledge, pulled himself out on the roof.

The wind, which had heightened, blew freshly across the open space and cooled his face, warm with this exertion.

Rading knew well enough that there was

no use in trying to force an entrance into the house next-door by means of the trapdoor on the roof. This had a steel cover and was securely barred from within.

What Rading intended doing was prying open the lock on one of the third-floor back windows. He crossed the roof. Lying flat on his stomach, he found that he could not reach the top of the window below even by stretching his arm to the utmost. The windows were built too far below the level of the roof. More drastic methods would therefore have to be resorted to.

Rading buttoned his coat tightly about him. From his pocket he took a small jimmy. Then, with the agility of an athlete, he lowered himself over the roof until he was hanging head downward, held up only by his legs from the knees down, which were flung back over the roof. His position was like that of a trapeze performer hanging head downward from the bar, holding on the roof edge only by his knees.

In this position Rading could reach the window with ease. He peered through it and was delighted to find that the room was deserted, being even bare of furniture.

Working with caution, nevertheless, he started to work with his jimmy to pry open the window. The lock would not give way. He exerted as much pressure on it as he could, in view of his precarious position, but the lock held firm.

For a moment Rading hung there perplexed as to his next move. Then a grin of satisfaction crossed his face as a new mode of procedure occurred to him. On his hand he wore a small diamond ring. With this diamond he described a circle on the pane of glass just over the lock. He grunted in approval as the stone scratched raspingly.

He gave the pane a sharp tap with his jimmy and the circle of glass fell with a "ping" into the deserted room. Inserting his hand into the hole Rading turned back the lock and lowered the window. He got up on the roof, lowered himself feet first until he stood on the window sash and holding onto the ladder he got himself lower and in a trice was in the room.

He rushed swiftly to the door and poised there, automatic in hand, to detect if any one had heard the falling of the glass or his entrance. The continued silence in the house reassured him, but he continued to remain at the door for several minutes. He was too old a hand at this game to take a brief temporary silence as sufficient assurance that his presence had not been detected. The absence of any questionable sound at length convinced him that the occupants of the house were unaware of his intrusion.

Slowly, a portion of a turn at a time, Rading turned the knob of the door. He was delighted to find the door unlocked. The hinges of the door were well oiled and it required but little time for him to open it sufficiently to permit his body to pass through. This difficulty surmounted, the rest was easy, for the halls and the stairs were heavily padded and carpeted, as were most all fashionable gambling dens.

The hall on this upper floor was dark, but peering over the banister Rading saw that the front hall was suffused with light coming from the reception hall, the room that fronted on the street.

"Hang it!" he said to himself. "That means I'll have the deuce of a time letting Warner in. Well, here goes," and he proceeded slowly down the stairs, pausing on each step.

He had made the second-story staircase when he suddenly flattened himself against the wall. As he paused the noise stopped; but he waited and then he heard it again, the faint swish of something moving over the long nap of the carpet.

Rading did not like his position. The light below was reflected along the banister and the polished wainscoting on the walls and cast a faint gleam of light on him. He deliberately stepped along the wall until he was in a more favorable position.

There he paused; no further sound met his ears. Seeing that nothing was to be gained by waiting longer, Rading proceeded down the second flight of stairs with the same precaution he had previously observed.

He had no sooner started down this flight when "ping!" a shot rang out in the house; a bullet whizzed down in front of him and buried itself in a step.

Rading turned like a flash and fired his

automatic into the dark at a spot from which he believed the shot must have been fired. Without waiting to learn the success of this chance shot he jumped down the stairs in order to get himself out of this awkward position. He rushed past the brilliantly lighted reception-hall into the vestibule and crouched there, revolver in hand, waiting for a further attack, either from above or from the front room.

None came. No further sound was to be heard.

Rading flung back the bolts of the door and admitted Warner.

"I was just about getting worried over you," whispered the lawyer as he stepped into the vestibule.

"You almost had need to," responded the detective. "Get out your gun," and in a few words he detailed the mysterious attack made upon him from the apparently deserted upper floor.

"I heard no shots," whispered Warner in amazement. "Who was it?"

"Don't know; too dark. Jones, most likely. We've got to rush that room over here; are you game?"

Warner nodded.

Side by side they slunk along the wall over to the open door leading into the lighted reception-room. For a moment they paused there. Together they jumped into it, revolvers drawn. It was deserted. A few dusty chairs, an overturned table were its only contents.

"Switch off the lights!" commanded Rading quickly. "Don't want that killer to have the drop on us."

Warner found the switch and threw the room into darkness.

"What's your next move?" he then asked Rading.

"There's something peculiar here," replied the detective. "I'm positive no one was on the third floor when I came in and yet—— Well, if he's up there, we'll go up after him, that's all."

"If that's Jones up there, where is Nambeil?" asked Warner.

"These gambling dens are honey-combed with hiding places and secret stairways. He's most likely in one of those, or else that was him upstairs."

"Oh, he wouldn't try to kill you!" gasped Warner, aghast.

"No? Wish I felt as confident. Well, it was either he or Jones, that certain, and we've got to get either or both of them. Do you want to come up or stay down here?"

"As you say."

"Come along, then," and cautiously the detective led the way to the stairs.

"Keep close to the wall," he whispered as they started slowly to ascend.

After they had gone about halfway up the first flight of stairs Warner grasped the detective's arm by way of calling his attention to a slight noise he had heard. It was a sharp metallic click, like the cocking of a revolver or the snapping back of a lock on a door. The darkness in the hall was so intense that their eyes could not function and it seemed as if this had added extra keenness to their sense of hearing.

They paused on the stairs to await a repetition of the sound, or further developments from it, but none came.

Warner felt rather than saw that the detective was shaking his head as though nothing was to be gained by a delay, and so they proceeded once more to pick their cautious way up the stairs.

They had not quite reached the first landing when they again paused. This time Rading had heard a noise—a creak, the faintest possible sort of a creak, but still sufficient to reach his trained ears. The sound had come from below.

Both men turned their heads and peered intently down into the darkened hall from which they had just come.

"Some one at the door!" whispered Rading out of the corner of his mouth. So softly had he said this that Warner was not certain whether he had heard the spoken words or if he had read the detective's thoughts.

They waited. The minutes seemed like dreary stretches of eternity. Warner's neck began to feel cramped as he gazed below him. He was impatient to proceed upstairs to find out who it was up there that had fired to kill Rading.

Suddenly the front door was flung wide open and two men dashed out of the house.

The door slammed shut behind them with a bang.

"After them!" cried Rading, throwing precaution to the winds. They flung themselves down the stairs to the front door.

They sprang outside just in time to see the two men dash into Nambeil's car. With a roar of the motor the machine bounded forward and sped down the street.

Then Lornt made good. As soon as he had seen the men dash out of the house he had made the driver of his taxi drive up to the house. Warner and Rading sprang into it as it rushed by without lessening its speed. Off they sped in precipitous pursuit.

"It's Jones and Nambeil," cried Warner as the wind flung his words back into his teeth.

Rading nodded. He had recognized the forms of the men as they were outlined for a moment in the doorway by the light outside.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE storm broke. People scurried to secure shelter from its heavy downpour and gazed in amazement at the two machines flying perilously along the wet and slippery streets.

Past traffic officers they sped, heedless of upraised arms and outcries. The rain and the fact that it was after the pre-theatre time cleared the streets in part for them.

"He's got to stop—he'll be jammed somewhere!" cried Warner.

"He's making for the ferries," replied Rading. "Can't you hit her up any faster?" he asked the driver of his machine.

In response the chauffeur stepped heavily on his accelerator and fed the car more gas, but little more speed resulted; they were going their limit.

Nambeil turned his car down Fulton street, a quick, perilous turn on the wet streets, but he made it without skidding.

A block away from the ferries a stalled motor truck had blocked a trolley car, and this jam had halted all traffic on Fulton street.

"That'll stop 'em!" cried Warner as he saw the block, but no sooner had he uttered the words than Nambeil drove his car up on the pavement, swinging dangerously near a group of people who had sought shelter under an awning.

A policeman supervising the clearing of the traffic jam called upon them to halt in the name of the law, but the car swung back upon the street and continued towards the ferries.

The taxi driver put on his brakes.

"I can't do a stunt like that," he muttered.

As his car slowed down, the occupants jumped out and continued the pursuit on foot. They ran around the obstructing trolley in time to see Nambeil's car drive into the ferry house. Despite the heavy downpour which was wetting them to the skin and the slippery footing, they redoubled their efforts in the chase.

"We'll never catch them on the boat!" gasped Warner.

"Got a scheme," replied Rading.

Into the ferry house they dashed, but the boat was already out of its slip and churning its way towards the Jersey shore. On the rear deck stood the object of their chase—the auto containing Jones and William Nambeil, and as they watched it for a moment retreat farther from them, Jones rose in the car and waved them a satiric farewell.

"Lornt!" cried Rading, "you phone over to Hoboken and have a taxi ready for us over there. You come with me, Warner," and he ran down to one of the wharves, followed by the lawyer.

"Couldn't you phone the police—Hoboken—nab them?" asked Warner as they ran down the river's side.

"No. Can't give them definite information. They might desert the car and walk off the boat."

They pulled up before a little house on the end of a wharf and then Warner realized Rading's plan; the detective was going to continue the pursuit in a police motor boat.

A few hasty words of explanation between Rading and the police sergeant, a disclosure of a badge, and Warner and the detective were in a motor boat cutting the water at a fast clip in pursuit of the ferryboat.

The rain poured down on them in torrents. Because of it they could see but dimly the outlines of the many boats on the river.

"Which ferryboat are they on?" asked the

policeman who was guiding the motor boat.

"Don't know which one it is now," returned Rading. "Make for Hoboken and we'll get them there when they land. Steer clear of any of these ferries; we want to nab them unawares."

With a heavy chug of its motor, the boat swung clear of the usual route of the ferries and plied its way through the teeming water.

Warner pulled down his hat and turned up his coat collar in an effort to protect himself from the fury of the storm, but Rading, lynx-eyed, peered towards the Jersey shore, utterly oblivious of the element's rage.

The little boat dodged in between tugs and liners appearing like huge, gray, misshapen hulks in the mist of the rain, and often it dipped its prow deep into the waves and flung the spray over its occupants. With a roar of its engine, a few final puffs and chugs, it glided into position beside a ladder leading up to a wharf, and without ado Warner and Rading climbed up it.

"Want me to wait?" shouted the policeman after them, but the roar of the wind and the rain drowned his voice.

"Which pier's the next ferryboat due to land at?" Rading asked one of the officials, who stared in amazement at the two men who, like drowned water-rats, had risen from the water's edge.

"Pier 3," he replied.

"You watch there while I get that taxi Lornt phoned for," commanded Rading to Warner as they sped toward pier 3.

Warner took up a position at the end of the pier where he could command a view of both exits for the boat. He had hardly stationed himself when Rading returned.

"Taxi's outside; engine a-going," he said.

The ferryboat came into view. Its bells clanged; its engine ceased working, and it glided smoothly into its slip.

On one of the gangways stood Nambeil and Jones. When they saw their two pursuers whom they believed they had successfully outwitted standing on the pier their faces went white in amazement. They sprang back and rushed to where their machine was parked. They had expected to have their car held up by the Jersey police and so had decided to abandon it. Now their safety lay in its speed.

As the machine sped out along the pier Rading jumped onto its running-board and grasped the side of the car. With an oath Jones wrenched the detective's hand off and gave him a violent shove which sent the detective sprawling.

The passengers leaving the boat stared in amazement at this spectacle.

Warner and Rading rushed into the street and jumped into the waiting taxi. The chauffeur had had his orders and started in immediate pursuit of the other car.

Hoboken, always quiet, almost deserted now because of the storm, missed seeing a thrilling chase. Over wet streets, dodging what traffic there was, recklessly turning corners, skidding, slipping, the two cars sped like gray ghosts through the night.

Nambeil's car, of better make, with smooth-running engine, greater capacity for speed, had the advantage throughout. Gradually it began to show its superiority and pull away from the pursuing machine.

Rading gritted his teeth in vexation. He pulled out his automatic and aimed at the spinning rear wheels of the car ahead. But he paused; to puncture one of the tires on such a slippery road meant to endanger the lives of the occupants of the car. Undecided, he held the gun poised in front of him. Warner, realizing what the detective was contemplating, touched his arm as though to restrain him. Rading shook his head in the negative and put his gun away.

There was a crash! A wild shriek!

In trying to dodge an approaching trolley car Nambeil's car had skidded completely around, turned turtle, throwing Jones clean out of the car and pinning Nambeil beneath the wheel.

"My God!" cried Warner. "They're both killed!"

Jones had been thrown fully ten feet away, and lay quiet, bleeding profusely from a wound on the head.

Rading and Warner, aided by the chauffeur, succeeded in getting Will Nambiel from under his car. His face was gashed and bruised, both arms dangled limply at his sides.

They placed both injured men into their

taxi and sped off to the nearest hospital.

It was with difficulty at this hour of the night that sergeons could be found to attend to the wounded men. But they were secured at length, and while they worked over the men Rading and Warner paced the corridor outside of the operating room.

"Better call Miss Nambeil," suggested Rading, "and get her to come over here. You can't tell how badly young Nambeil's hurt."

As gently as he could Warner broke the news of the chase and the resulting accident to Elene by telephone.

"Well?" queried Rading, when Warner returned.

"She's coming over at once. She's terribly upset, of course, but I assured her he wasn't badly injured. I hope I'm right."

After an hour filled with impatient expectation had passed the surgeons came out of the operating room and were eagerly questioned as to the outcome.

"The older one, Jones, I think his name is, is done for. Fractured skull; won't last an hour."

"And the other?" asked Warner breathlessly.

"Oh, he'll do. Only broken arms, bad cuts and so on. Nothing serious at all."

"Say," said Rading, "that Jones fellow. Is he conscious? If so, I must talk to him. I'm Detective Rading from New York and I'm concerned in a murder in which he seems to have been implicated."

"Sure," was the reply. "Go right in to him; he's conscious. But find out where his relatives are so that they can be sent for."

Rading went to the room where Jones was lying. He would not permit Warner to accompany him; he preferred to interview the dying man alone.

So Warner continued to pace up and down the white-walled corridor awaiting Elene's arrival. His wet garments clung unpleasantly to him; an odor of dampness rose from them that served to make his condition exceedingly uncomfortable.

He wondered what Rading was learning from Jones—Jones, who a brief hour before had tauntingly waved his hand at the detective in farewell, and who now was at the door of futurity with the detective in his turn giving him a last farewell.

Half an hour later Rading came out from the room. His face was taut, his eyes appeared strained. That he was laboring under some emotional strain was evidenced by the fact that he was not chewing on his cigar as was his usual custom, but instead was gripping it firmly and motionlessly between his clenched teeth.

In his hand he carried a packet of letters.

He walked up to Warner and stood for a moment silently gazing at the attorney.

"He's gone west," he said in a low tone.

He continued to keep his eyes upon Warner as though trying to read the mystery of death in his countenance.

"Warner," he said at length, "Jones told me quite a few things before he went—about Truess and all that. He was Truess's right-hand man; he did his dirty work, and there was plenty of it done, too. Jones told me enough to convince me that Truess was a scoundrel, a low-down mongrel who wouldn't hesitate to stoop to the lowest deception in order to attain his ends.

"He told me how Truess double-crossed your father——"

Warner clenched his fists, his jaw tightened; the muscles in his cheek hardened and relaxed. "He was a dog!" he said.

"And he also told me," continued the detective, "how Truess had planned with him to get Mrs. Norton to trap young Nambeil, to lure him by her fascinations. Truess's motive, of course, was to coerce Miss Nambeil into marrying him—and he wasn't fit to marry the meanest woman, let alone that refined girl.

"These letters here are the correspondence between Nambeil and this Mrs. Norton. Truess was holding them over Nambeil's head, although they were supposedly destroyed; he threatened to publish them in case Miss Nambeil backed out. Jones got hold of them and was using them to blackmail William; that's why the lad went to the Eldridge street house to-night, and that's how Jones forced him to aid him in escaping from us. It was these letters that Miss Nambeil wanted you to get from him at ten o'clock to-night."

Warner started back in surprise.

"Oh, Jones told me all about that," con-

tinued Rading. "He was collecting from both Will Nambeil and from his sister for them. He was a pretty scoundrel, too. Here, Warner, you'd better turn these over to Miss Nambeil when she comes here," and he handed the packet of letters to Warner.

Warner said nothing in reply but placed the letters in his coat pocket. The detective paced the room and then returned to his position in front of the lawyer.

"Warner," he said abruptly, "do you love Miss Nambeil?"

"Why—I——"

"Don't stammer. Tell me the truth."

"Well, then, I do."

"And she?"

"Cares for me, too, I think; though she didn't show me that because she was bound to Truess."

The detective chewed his cigar reflectively for several minutes, while Warner gazed at him wondering what prompted these abrupt personal questions.

"Well, Warner," said the detective with strange irrelevancy, "Jones killed Truess."

"He did?" cried Warner.

"The newspapers will explain to-morrow that because of a quarrel between these two scoundrels Jones killed his master."

"The newspapers will contain that story!" echoed Warner in a faltering tone. "Don't you believe——"

"Never mind that," said Rading dryly. "That's the story they'll print. Warner," he continued, pointing his cigar at the attorney, "always remember that too much poison is as bad as too little—it won't kill; and too good an explanation is as bad as too poor a one."

He turned abruptly on his heel and walked to the door. There he paused and said slowly: "Warner, you're a good fellow. Tell Miss Nambeil, now, rather than later; she'll understand. Goodnight," and with a nod the detective left.

Warner stood stock still and turned over the detective's words in his mind. "Too much poison," he reflected. "Too good an explanation — tell Elene now."

"Rading's real," he cried out loud. "He's right. I'll do it!"

As William had fallen into a much-needed sleep, they refused to permit Elene to see him upon her arrival. She determined to wait in the hospital until she could see him and learn if it were possible to remove him from the institution, so she waited in the reception-room with Warner. Owing to the lateness of the hour, they had the room to themselves. Occasionally soft-footed internes or white-clad nurses walked by the door and looked in wonder at the man in drenched clothing speaking earnestly to an aristocratic-looking girl, but otherwise the two were not disturbed.

"Elene," said Warner, "Detective Rading has just left and he's given me some parting advice that I'm going to follow. In the first place to-morrow's papers will announce that Jones was the murderer of Truess."

"But isn't he? The way you put it, it would seem——"

"No, Elene," he interrupted. "Jones did not kill Truess. I did."

"You!" she cried.

"Yes, I. Truess doubled-crossed my father; ruined him; broke his career, and sent him to an early grave, a broken, disgraced man. I determined to avenge that blot on our name, and when I grew up I cultivated Truess's acquaintance. He never realized who I was. Through him I met you and—learned to love you. When I found out that he was gripping you in his poisonous coils, I determined to pay a double debt, to avenge my father and release you. I did so."

"So that is why you could explain the hoax in Truess's room about the whisky glasses and the cigarettes and all that."

"Yes, I had laid the stage myself. It would have deceived the police, the ordinary men, but it never got by Rading. When I explained the clues I explained them too well. So well, in fact, that I practically told Rading that I had killed Truess.

"I overdid myself; I explained details that Rading had not noticed yet, and which he knew I could not have explained in the short examination I had made. I didn't realize the fact then, but I appreciated it later. Rading couldn't prove my guilt then, so he kept close to me, took me with him on his investigations of the supposed guilty valet and your brother.

His purpose was to watch me, to see if he could catch me off my guard.

"From Jones, just before he died, he learned all about my father, and the truth about you. Rading has a heart, and so he's let me go free. As Jones has no name to spoil—he's done time in jail already—Rading is putting the blame of the murder upon him."

"Then you're to be free!" cried Elene exultingly.

"Yes; due to Rading."

"I wonder why he's doing this?"

"Because—because, Elene, he sees that I did this in great part for love of you. I love you, Elene. There's blood on my hands, but if you're willing to help me wash them clean——"

"Fred," she murmured as she put her arms about his neck and drew him close to her, "Fred, I love you, too, and though your hands may be stained, your heart is clean and pure; what else matters?"

Slowly he bent his head down until his lips met hers, and in the sanctity of their first kiss of love the crimson stain was cleansed away.

FAIRY TALES FOR JAPANESE CHILDREN

IF a man thinks only of his own profit and tries to benefit himself at the expense of others he will incur the hatred of Heaven. Men should lay up in their hearts the story of "The Ape and the Crap" and teach it as a profitable lesson to their children.

Once upon a time there was a crab who lived in a marsh in a certain part of the country. It fell out one day that the crab, having picked up a rice cake, an ape, who had got a nasty, hard persimmon seed, begged the crab to make an exchange with him. The crab, who was a simple-minded creature, agreed, and each went his way.

When the crab got home he planted the persimmon seed in his garden, where it sprouted and by degrees grew to be a big tree. The crab watched the growth of his tree with great delight, but when the fruit ripened and he was going to pluck it the ape came in and offered to gather it for him. The crab consenting, the ape climbed up into the tree and began eating all the ripe fruit himself, while he only threw down the sour persimmons to the crab, inviting him to eat heartily.

The crab, however, was not pleased at this arrangement and thought it was time for him to play a trick on the ape; so he called out to him to come down head foremost. The ape did as he was bid, and as he crawled down head foremost the ripe fruit all came tumbling out of his pockets, and the crab, having picked up the persimmons, ran away and hid himself in a hole. The ape, seeing this, lay in ambush, and as soon as the crab crept out of his hiding place gave him a sound drubbing and went home. Just at this time a friendly egg and a bee, who were the apprentices of a certain rice mortar, happened to pass that way, and seeing the crab's piteous condition tied up his wounds, escorted him home and began to lay plans to be revenged upon the cruel ape.

Having agreed upon a scheme, they all went to the ape's house, in his absence; and, each one having undertaken a certain part, they waited in secret for their enemy to come home. When the ape returned, having a fancy to drink a cup of tea, he began lighting the fire in the hearth, when all of a sudden the egg, who had hidden in the ashes, burst with the heat and bespattered the frightened ape's face, so that he fled, howling with pain. He tried to go to the back of the house, when the bee darted out of a cupboard, and a piece of seaweed, who had joined the party, coming up at the same time, the ape was surrounded by his enemies. In despair he seized the clothes rack and fought for a while; but he was no match for so many and was forced to run away, with the others in hot pursuit. Just as he was making his escape by a back door the piece of seaweed tripped him up and the mortar, closing with him from behind, made an end of him.

So the crab, having punished his enemy, went home in triumph and lived ever after on terms of brotherly love with the seaweed and the mortar.

Coining Precious Metals

AN officer, standing beside a visitor who had watched with all the fascination of a novice the great iron mouths opening and closing, betrayed himself into a neat explanation of the process of minting money. He has been many years at the mint at Philadelphia, so the visitor listened with interest, as to one who spoke with authority. Here is the process in a nutshell used when this was written:

"Making money," said he, "is just like making cake. You mix the dough, we mix the metal. You roll out the dough into shape, we roll out the metal into bars. You cut the dough into cakes, we cut the metal into coins. Then we stamp them. The metal left over is melted up and used again, just as the cook gathers up the left-overs, rolls them again, and cuts more cakes."

In other words, an amount of metal, say the equivalent of $90,000 in gold, which chemically is made up of 90 per cent. gold and 10 per cent. copper, is put into a black-lead crucible about the size of a peck measure. It is kept in the furnace one hour and fifteen minutes. The workman watches his gold as sacredly as the cook her cakes, and when the molten liquid is brought to the proper consistency, he takes a three-cornered black-lead cup, about the size that would fit a monkey's head, and dips up $2,000 worth of the metal at a time, pouring it out again with that marvelous dexterity which only comes from practice into molds holding $1,000 each. Nothing can be more beautiful than the fiery stream of young and pure gold as it glides into the locked arms of the iron mold. When the liquid solidifies it forms a bar, or to be technically correct, an ingot about twelve inches long and about half an inch thick.

These ingots are subjected to a process of rolling out which lengthens them without increasing the width. The bars are then ready to be cut. One machine cuts the coin, another stamps them after the process of milling has been performed. Milling, in mint parlance, has somewhat of a different signification than in ordinary vernacular. It signifies the rolling over of the edge of the coin preparatory to stamping it with the minute denticulations, which are commonly known as the milling. The latter is part of the process of stamping, and is done at the time that the signet is put on the coin.

Speaking of stamping introduces the large corps of women who form a considerable part of the working force of the mint. About 100 of them are employed and they attend entirely to the adjusting and stamping. It may be said in explanation of the process of the term "adjusting" that every coin before it is shaped is carefully weighed. If too heavy the edge is delicately filed until the coin is of lawful weight; if too light the piece is sent to be remelted. This process of weighing and adjusting is an employment to which women, with their delicacy of touch, are well suited. They are also in charge of the stamping. Incidentally it may be said that most presses stamp from 80 to 110 coins every minute. In one short hour $45,000 in ten-dollar gold pieces can be stamped around the edge and on both sides.

There is another part of the work which comes under the charge of the women employed at the mint. They do the sewing. At first thought it seems a trifle incongruous to associate sewing with money minting, but all the bags used by the mint are sewed in the building. The bags are made of white duck and are run up by machine, being sewed twice for security. The bag making is no small thing when you come to consider the number it takes to pack up the newly coined wealth of the country each year. The five-cent pieces are packed in $50 bags and the pennies in $10 bags, small silver in $1,000 and the gold in $5,000 pouches. Roughly speaking, fully 2,000 bags are made up for gold alone, 16,000 for silver, 5,000 for half-dollars.

The present output may be different.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

by

Frederic W. Johnson

CHAPTER ONE

THE nervous, highstrung young man at the desk, who went by the name of James Cullom, was engaged in a somewhat curious procedure. First he wrote a short note on the typewriter and, by the same means, addressed an envelope to go with it. Next he got out two stamps, one a special delivery and the other of the usual two-cent denomination, and affixed them with rather more care than the task seemed to deserve. And lastly, using a black crayon pencil, he made a neat post-mark above the address, with, to the left, the familiar set of parallel waving lines which flowed over the stamps, canceling them. Scarcely had the last stroke been made and the effect noted when the door opened and a voice said:

"Well, Jim, how is it going?"

"Oh," said the man at the desk without turning, "so it's you, Henry? Rather well, I think. Come and see."

Henry crossed to his brother's side and began to examine the fruits of the evening's labors. The note was startlingly brief, and read:

"Cullom knows everying. Be careful."

The envelope was addressed to Miss Charlotte, 464 Monadnock street, Plymton, Mass. From the inscription in the neatly drawn circle above, the reader might infer that it had been posted that same evening in New York at some time before ten.

Henry nodded over the work in a kind of grim approval. The sham post-mark seemed especially to hold his eye.

"There's nothing like practice, is there?" he said crisply. "Jim, you've done yourself proud. This thing would fool the postmaster general." He glanced about the room. "Everything ready? Got your automatic?"

"Yes. In my coat pocket."

Henry put the note in the envelope. "This," he said as he sealed it, "is deadly enough for me. I shan't need any automatic." He took out his watch. "Ten minutes of eleven. Good Lord, Jim," he added almost in a whisper, "think of to-morrow night at this time!"

"I am ready," said the elder brother in a voice that sounded like the tolling of a bell.

"We're both ready," responded the other in the same tone. Then, as he turned to the door, "Good-night, Jim."

"Good-night, Henry."

CHAPTER TWO

THE train on which they traveled left Boston the following afternoon at two and arrived at Plymton shortly after five. So that by six Henry had unpacked his bag and was making himself at home in the best room of the Eagle Hotel, and his brother was warming his hands at the library fire in Rodney Sprague's house on Monadnock street.

Sprague was a small, fair, prettified man of forty, very much dressed up in an expensive gray suit that had evidently come that very day from the tailor's. Everything he wore had this same look of being just out of the shop. So that in the impression he gave he was a bit suggestive of a house that has been freshly painted and hasn't had time to tone down. His sister Charlotte, who was a year or two older, was also fair. But hers was a golden fairness; even her eyes were of a golden amber tone that found an echo in the warm color of the silk dress she wore.

As the talk flowed on, the visitor, who had never met Miss Sprague before, noted with rising spirits that what he had heard of her was deeply, indubitably, astonishingly true. Though little that could be called human might be found in the feelings with which she faced the rest of the world, it was clear that her regard for her brother amounted to an adoration that knew no bounds. Other women might have husbands if they wished; to her Rodney Sprague was more than twenty husbands. And this was made so evident by the peculiar caressing tone in which she always spoke to him that no one who saw them together could ever remain long in the dark as to why this strange and beautiful woman had never married. To Cullom the spectacle of this more than sisterly regard was a source of secret gratification. It was what he had counted on and come prepared for. As he went up to dress for dinner he couldn't help musing on the curious way in which it fitted in with the dreadful purpose of his visit.

At the table a new thought struck him. If the unbelievable had happened, if Henry had delivered the letter an hour too soon, then the food set before James Cullom in this house would hardly be safe eating. With this on his mind, he became for the first time almost breathlessly aware of how deep were the waters in which he was moving. But a quick covert glance at his companions' faces discovered no sign that anything unusual was in the air. His hostess appeared particularly serene. And in the mellow glow of the hanging lamp her fair beauty seemed even more golden than before. As for her brother the change into his evening clothes had somehow rid him of that new look which made him so suggestive of a tailor's dummy in the daytime.

They were both of them as nice as possible to their guest. In his own tepid, colorless way Sprague was genuinely attached to Cullom. And his sister was always able and willing to discover a sort of vicarious charm in any friend of Rodney's. For the second time the conversation turned on the weather, which was bitter cold. This Miss Sprague chose to regard as highly absurd.

"It was below zero when I came in," she complained. "Who ever heard of such temperatures in Plymton? We might just as well live in St. Paul and be done with it. Rodney" —her tone changed like a strain of music that modulates into another key—"you must be careful to-night. You won't leave any of your windows open, will you?"

Her brother smiled back at her. "Humph," he said, "you needn't worry about that. I don't care to wake up to-morrow with my ears frozen."

Afterward, as they sat drinking their coffee in the library, Cullom caught himself in the act of watching the clock. It now lacked but five minutes of eight. When the hour struck the curtain would rise and the play begin. Who, he reflected, could predict the moment at which that curtain would fall, or tell beforehand what grim spectacle it would hide from view as it descended? As it happened, however, the drama began a minute or two before the appointed time. Even as he waited he suddenly heard the clear peal of a bell, followed by a quiet step in the hall and the sound of an opening door. A moment later a maid came in bringing a letter on a salver to her mistress.

A slight frown flitted across Miss Sprague's face as she glanced at the address.

"I haven't the slightest idea as to whom it's from," she said. "But it's special delivery,

so it may be important." Then, with a gracious "I know you will pardon me," she opened the letter and scanned its astonishing contents.

To the visitor, who, his face averted, was watching her with furtive eyes, it seemed almost as if he could see the words—"Cullom knows everything. Be careful"—leaping into the unruffled pool of her mind. But her features gave not the slightest hint that all was not well. Her cheeks retained their faint yet ripened bloom. And when, after a quick scrutiny of both sides of the sheet, she again looked up it was to face her guest with untroubled eyes.

"What is it, Charlotte?" Sprague asked. "Has anything happened?"

"No, dear," was the cool reply. "It's nothing." As she spoke she crumpled the letter in her hand and with a negligent gesture tossed it lightly into the fire.

The stars had been kind, the visitor felt, in decreeing that Sprague should find pleasure in no conversation that was not wholly inane. It was therefore possible for Cullom to do his share of the talking even while his brain was being rocked by the thought of what was going on under the surface. And that thought was a grim one indeed. For, if things were going according to the plan he had made, Miss Sprague would now be trying to decide on the best and safest method of putting him out of the way. With this fact before his eyes it was not at all easy to follow the stream of platitudes that were being uttered on the price of coal and the reconstruction of Europe, however meaningless these might be. Still, he argued, her position was, after all, much more difficult than his. And if she could play her part with such marble composure, it behooved him, so far as in him lay, to do the same. Nevertheless, the strain of it was the hardest thing he had ever been called upon to bear, and he drew a deep breath of relief when the clock struck ten and she arose from her chair.

"That means bedtime for me," she explained. "I seem to require a vast amount of sleep." As she spoke she crossed gracefully to her brother's side and, stooping down, kissed him full upon the lips. "Good-night, dear," she said, speaking very low. "Be sure not to forget about the windows." Then, turning to her guest, who had also risen, she added: "Rodney is such a night owl, Mr. Cullom, I know he'll love to sit up with you as long as you wish. And if there's anything you can think of that you'd like, don't hesitate to mention it, will you? Good-night."

With the departure of that dominant spirit the tension relaxed a little, but it was only a little. As the two men sat smoking in the silence that followed the visitor's ear picked up one by one the small noises that are heard in a house at night, as well as the crackle of the fire on the hearth and the low crooning of the wind outside. In the same way his eye, roving about, noted the sombre furniture, the rows of unread books, the vapid figure of his host blowing smoke rings toward the ceiling. It was all of a piece. Everything that Cullom could see or hear or feel seemed commonplace beyond the power of words to describe. And yet, whatever his senses might have to say, the voice of reason told him that there was murder in the air. In compliance with the requirements of his plan, however, he must endure the suspense of this final hour of waiting and not seek relief by so much as the lifting of a finger till it was over. It was therefore with a devout sense of thanksgiving that, as the clock struck eleven, he rose and started for the stairs with his host walking and talking by his side.

On reaching his room Cullom went over to the window and stood there a moment listening.

"Does this room face the railroad?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes," Sprague replied. "Does that make any difference?"

"I am afraid it does. I'm an awfully light sleeper, you know." He stopped to think. "I don't suppose there's a room on the other side of the hall that you could let me have?"

"Yes, there's mine. You're welcome to that, and I'll take this one. I could sleep in a boiler factory."

"Oh, no, thanks. That wouldn't do at all. I couldn't think of it even for a minute."

"Good Lord, man, why not? Nothing in the world could be more simple."

But Cullom was stubbornly shaking his head. "No," he objected, "it wouldn't be fair

to you. And your sister wouldn't like it, either."

"What rot! Of course she would. Charlotte's dignified and all that, but she's an awfully good sort just the same. Here, let me show you." He snapped shut Cullom's suitcase, which was lying open on the bed, and catching it up darted from the room to return a few minutes later with an armful of the things he would need for the night.

"There," he said as he laid them down. "So much for that."

But Cullom was still dubious. "You're absolutely sure," he began, as they crossed the hall and entered Sprague's room, "that your sister——?"

"Absolutely. But, if you like, I'll promise not to let her know anything about it. Will that satisfy you?"

"Oh, yes. Perfectly."

"Good. So that's settled. And now, unless there's something else——"

"No. There's nothing, thanks. I've got everything I need."

"Right-o. In that case I'd better be toddling along and leave you to your slumbers. Good-night, Cullom."

"Good-night."

When the door closed Cullom drew a small automatic from his pocket and sitting down on the bed with the weapon ready in his hand settled himself for another half-hour of waiting. It would take all of that, he figured, to make him really safe against the contingency of Sprague's return. And after the hurly-burly through which his soul had passed the prospect of a short solitary vigil was far from disagreeable. As the minutes flowed by his eyes came to rest upon one after another of the effeminate trifles with which the room was crowded. And this leisurely survey was hardly over when, discovering from a glance at his watch that the time was up, he began rummaging in his suitcase, and presently drew out a coil of fine strong rope with small cross-pieces of wood run at regular intervals between the strands. His next step was to tie one end of this securely to the leg of the bed.

Then, having cautiously opened the nearest window, he proceeded slowly to pay out the rest of the rope over the sill till the whole ran taut from the bed to the ground. Finally, after a quick glance around, he switched out the light and again crossed to the window. In another moment he had passed backward through it and disappeared.

CHAPTER THREE

WHEN he returned it was still dark, but there was a raw taste of morning in the air and the bar of pale amethyst across the eastern sky. As he switched on the lights he turned for a moment to the glass. The face he saw there was gaunt and worn, the eyes haggard. And yet, in spite of his feeling that the courage had been drained out of him to the last drop, there was clearly nothing for it but to go on. Accordingly, having coiled the rope and replaced it in the suitcase, he again took his place on the bed and, with his face toward the door and the pistol in his hand, started in on the final period of his vigil.

The time of this was not long, though it seemed so to his aching head and jaded nerves. Little by little the dawn reached the windows and floated gently in like an amiable silvery presence. At seven there was a stir in the regions below. At eight or a little after his ear caught the careful tread of feet outside his door and the buzz of anxious voices whispering. Then a door opened and suddenly the air was torn by a woman's scream that rang through the house, waking it to a confusion of hurrying feet, a shrill clamor of terrified questions and answers. This, however, was not for long. Gradually the hubbub subsided, giving place to a grim, menacing silence, which was not broken till nearly an hour later, when there came the sound of a firm step on the stairs and an authoritative knock on Cullom's door.

The man to whom he opened it was of medium height and middle-age, simply dressed, square-cut, and vigorous. He had almost an iron strength of feature and a pair of blue eyes that were shrewd and watchful without being devoid of a certain grave good humor. He at once spoke:

"You are Mr. James Cullom, I believe. My

name is McMartin. I am connected with the police. Will you please step this way?"

Cullom followed, wondering, and presently was standing in the room he had been given the night before. At first glance there was nothing about the room itself that seemed particularly out of the way. But the three windows were wide open, the frosty air smelled slightly of gas, and on the bed lay Rodney Sprague, his face a curious leaden blue, his eyes glazed and staring—dead. He was dressed in lilac silk pajamas, with tie and handkerchief to match, and from these rose a faint odor of violet sachet. As he looked down upon the poor sorry remnant of mortality Cullom couldn't help noticing how little it had of that dignity which we expect in one who, having partaken of his share of the banquet of life, rises at last to go. This thought was interrupted, however, by a quiet question from McMartin.

"Did you do it?"

"No."

"I suppose you know what I mean?"

"I think I do," rejoined Cullom. "You mean to ask, did I kill him? And my answer is that I didn't." He paused for a moment before adding: "Couldn't he have done it himself? Are you sure he was killed?"

"Yes, absolutely. He was found with the room full of gas and the windows closed. That gas-jet you are looking at was turned off. He couldn't have made away with himself and then got up and turned off the thing that killed him. No, this is a case of murder."

Cullom fell silent as he thought it over. McMartin was also silent, on principle. He had always made it a point to listen while others did the talking. If a suspect asked questions so much the better. It is seldom difficult to take the measure or even to read the mind of a man who asks questions. After an interval Cullom spoke again:

"How about the servants? Do they know anything?"

"No, they don't seem to."

"Then who found the body?"

"Ella, the housemaid. But, judging from what she says, she knows no more about it than I do."

"Oh, I see," said the other absently. Again he stopped to think, while McMartin waited. At last Cullom put the question that had been on his tongue from the beginning.

"Where is Miss Sprague? Have you seen her?"

"She's in the library. Yes, I saw her, but it was only for a moment. There wasn't time to say anything."

"Well, then, why not go down now and get her statement? Afterward I can give you mine. What do you say?"

"That will suit me to a T," said McMartin promptly. More talking, he thought. It was just what he wanted.

They found her sitting in a terrible stony silence, alone. Her face was pale with the gray, barren pallor of ashes. Her eyes were no longer golden, but hard and wide and glassy. It seemed to Cullom that in her features there was far more of the remote, inscrutable quality of death than in those of the pitiful figure on the bed upstairs. Apparently she took no notice of him, but acknowledged his companion's presence by a very slight inclination of the head. McMartin was the first to speak.

"Miss Sprague," he said, "I know you are under a great strain and I should like to spare you as far as I possibly can. But I have gone over the case pretty thoroughly with your servants without getting the slightest hint as to what happened last night in your brother's room. So, if you can tell me something, even if it's only a little, I should be very glad to hear it."

At first she was silent. When she did speak it was as if a marble image were speaking.

"I know everything," she said, "so I can tell everything. I know just what happened and how it happened, and when. Shall I begin," she asked, "by telling you who it was that killed my brother?"

"By all means, yes, if you can. That's what I am here to find out."

"Then," she said, "listen!" As she paused her eyes seemed even more cold, her features more stony, her whole spirit more enveloped in a pale aura as of death, than before. "The person who killed my brother," she went on, "is the person who came here last night as his guest, pretending to be his friend; the person who at the present moment is sitting with

us here in this room listening to what we have to say."

The official's eyebrows lifted. "Indeed," he said. "You are referring to Mr. Cullom, of course?"

"That, I believe, is his name."

"Very good. And now, Miss Sprague, if you will tell me just what you know, being especially particular as to the time——"

"The time?" she echoed. "The time was two o'clock this morning. At least it was that when I first saw him."

"By 'him' I take it you mean Mr. Cullom!"

"Yes," she said. It was as if her hatred was so intense and so deadly that she could not bring herself to call its object by name. "Yes," she repeated, "he is the one I mean. I had been awakened by a sound that seemed to come from the hall. So I got up and opened the door on a crack and looked through. He was just coming up the stairs. He was fully dressed and was carrying something of a circular shape under his coat."

"You are certain that it was he?"

"Absolutely. I could swear to it. There was a light burning at the head of the stairs and as he turned it fell full upon his face. I couldn't be mistaken. Of course it seemed rather odd that a guest should have an errand downstairs at such an hour. But he was almost a stranger to me. He might have all sorts of queer ways for aught I knew. So I put the matter out of my mind and went back to bed.

"Then, at a little after four, the incident was repeated. Again I was awakened and got up to look. Again I saw him coming up the stairs. It was all the same as before except for one significant detail. On this second occasion he was not hiding anything under his coat.

"Of course I felt perfectly clear as to what had happened. He had wanted something downstairs and had gone down at two to get it. Then, at four, he had gone down again to take it back. What the something was I couldn't possibly guess, though I must have tried for nearly an hour. I was still puzzling over it when I again fell asleep.

"You already know the terrible way in which this day began. I was awakened at eight by a scream that roused the whole house. It was Ella, I believe, who screamed. Then Molly came in and told me my brother was dead, and almost at once I thought of what I had seen during the night. So when the first shock was over I began to search and after ransacking every room on this floor I succeeded in finding— this." She had turned over a cushion on the couch at her side, revealing a coil of flexible tubing covered with green cloth. "We have a gas lamp here for reading, as you see. This tube belongs to it. It was here last night, I am sure of that. But this morning when I found it, it was in the barn, hidden away deep down in a barrel of lime. This is the upper end. You will find, I think, that it fits any gas-jet, especially the one in the hall near the door of the room where my brother died. And this is the lower end. The metal part has been cut off, as you see, so that, if you were to pinch it, thus, you would be able to insert it in any small aperture, such as the key-hole of a door. And now, Mr. McMartin, I think you will agree with me that there is not the faintest shadow of a doubt as to how my brother met his death or as to who killed him."

The official took the tube and examined it in silence. Then he looked up again into the speaker's face. He was, to tell the truth, painfully ill at ease. For though the bereaved woman had told her story with a singular force and clarity, yet in the iron tones of her voice, and especially in the tense and furious way in which she clasped her hands together, there were to be discerned the intimations of an approaching madness that was being brought nearer by every tick of the clock and every beat of her stricken heart. As if seeking relief he turned to Cullom, who had maintained throughout the interview a cold, tranquil silence.

"You have heard this lady's story, Mr. Cullom. If you have anything to say now is the time to say it."

"In that I agree with you," was the reply. "But first I wish you would ask Miss Sprague how she comes to be so sure as to the time of these strange actions of mine."

"That is easily answered. The first time I heard the clock of St. Mark's strike two as I was watching at the door. The second time I turned on the light and looked at my

watch before going back to bed. It was exactly seventeen minutes past four."

"Very good," Cullom replied. "I have to insist so particularly on this question of time because it is that that makes my own story so interesting. For, as a matter of fact, I was not in the house at the hours Miss Sprague mentions. I left my room last night by way of the window at a quarter of twelve, and didn't return till five minutes past six."

"So," said McMartin. "That explains some very peculiar foot-prints in the snow beneath your window. I've been wondering about them."

"Perhaps it may," said Miss Sprague, addressing Cullom for the first time. "But no footprints can tell us when you left and when you returned. We have only your own word for it that you were out of the house during the greater part of the night."

"Mine and one other's," Cullom replied. "I went straight from here to the Eagle Hotel, getting there at five minutes past twelve and coming away at a quarter to six. Mr. Roberts, the night clerk, will probably tell you that I whiled away the time partly by talking to him and partly by reading a magazine in the office."

For a moment her face was blank, as if the import of this had not yet reached her understanding. Then suddenly she stiffened with the shock, aghast at the terrible significance of what he had said. For by the force of these words he had brought down the whole fabric of her story with a crash which proclaimed to high heaven that every syllable of it that related to him was utterly and avowedly a lie. On the other hand, her exact and fatal knowledge of the details of the crime, her possession at this very moment of the means by which it had been committed, formed a body of evidence so damaging and disastrous to herself that even a child would have grasped what it meant. The whole thought of this seemed to sweep over her at once, laying her spirit low. Unclasping her rigid hands, she raised them in a quick, brief gesture of weariness and defeat.

"I may as well confess myself beaten," she said with quiet finality. "And now, Mr. McMartin, what next? I suppose it is your duty to place me under arrest at once."

"I am afraid so. That is, unless you have something to say?"

"No!" she exclaimed with sudden bitterness. "I've said enough. But if you will permit me to write a letter first——"

"With all my heart," he replied sadly.

"In that case——" Rising, she went to the desk and the two men sat watching as her hand traveled slowly across the sheet of paper. It didn't, however, travel long. Scarcely had a single line been written when the pen stopped and the beautiful head and shoulders began to droop slowly downward, as if the burden of life were too great and heavy to be borne.

The two men exchanged uneasy glances. Then suddenly McMartin started from his chair with his hands held out in a vague gesture of compassion. But even before he reached her he knew that he was too late, that another and greater than he had already touched her and passed on. The means of her release, a small uncorked vial, was still clutched in the soft palm of her hand. McMartin sniffed. An odor like that of broken peach-stones had become distinguishable in the air.

"Good God, she's dead!" he said in a hoarse, dry whisper. "I ought to have known, I suppose. But it didn't seem possible. After all, though, perhaps it's just as well. Will you help me, Mr. Cullom?"

Together they carried her over to the couch, and having laid her down, went back to see what she had written. It wasn't much, only two sentences altogether. But into those two sentences the stricken woman had somehow condensed the whole argument of her tragic story. The note ran thus:

"He was all I had, yet I killed him. I don't know where he has gone, but wherever he goes I must go also."

For many minutes the official stood with the letter in his hand, groping blindly for an answer to the riddle it contained. "This," he said at last, "is just so much Greek to me. It leaves us, if anything, even more in the dark than before. If you," he added, "have got anything to say that will throw some light on the subject I wish to heaven you'd say it now."

"That," said Cullom, "is just what I propose to do. But I shall have to begin at the beginning. And to do that I must go back ten years and tell you about my father.

"He was a big, sanguine, friendly sort of a man, who had been able to make a snug fortune simply because people found him so pleasant to trade with. His whole life, so far as I could ever discover, was as blameless as a girl's. And yet his last years were embittered by a prolonged course of blackmail, and the person who levied it was a woman. The trap she laid for him was beautifully simple. In the fall of 1910 he had occasion to go to New York on business and, unbeknown to him, she followed. As they were perfect strangers to each other nothing could have been easier. Then, as he was passing out of the Grand Central station, she fell in beside him and uttered a slight sound, just enough to make him turn his head for an instant to look at her. In that instant her brother, who had gone on ahead, was able, unobserved, to take a snap-shot of the two of them from the sidewalk. During my father's stay in the city this trick was played again and again, so that, when it was over, they had pictures showing him leaving his hotel, looking into shop windows, buying theatre tickets, living his whole life, in short, with the woman by his side. Judging from the face of the returns, any one would have sworn that he and she had taken the trip together. When he got back she showed him the pictures and asked him what he proposed to do.

"Left to himself, of course, he would have followed Wellington's example and told her to publish and be damned. But, as it happened, there was my mother to consider. My mother was a little shy, sweet-faced woman with a weak heart. Over the latter the specialist she called in had shaken his head and looked very grave. She might live to be eighty, he told my father, but any sudden shock would mean instant and certain death. My father therefore knew only too bitterly well that letting her see those pictures would be just the same as hitting her on the head with a club. So, big and brave as he was, he began to pay, and during the years that followed he kept on paying, till everything he had—savings, business, even the roof over his head—was gone. When he was about down to his last dollar my mother died of privation, as I firmly and solemnly believe, and my brother Henry and I, coming on for the funeral, found my father dying, too. I don't know what else he had the matter with him, but what he died of was a broken heart. Henry and I have a realty business in Omaha. My father hadn't told us of his trouble for fear we might do something desperate; but as he lay on his deathbed he poured out the whole pitiful story. And so when he, too, had been buried, we went back to Omaha and began to lay our plans for striking down those who had ruined him.

"An agent of ours soon picked up their trail and traced them here to Plymton, where they had settled down under the name of Sprague to a life of respectability and ease. Accordingly, using the name of Cullom, which, of course, is not my own, I scraped an acquaintance with Sprague during a duck hunting trip he took to Maryland, and got him to invite me here on a visit. I think you will be able to guess what followed. I got here last night, having first arranged that Miss Sprague should be anonymously informed that I was acquainted with her past. There was a man named Guthrie who crossed swords with her two years ago and came soon afterwards to a sudden and mysterious end. I felt, therefore, that I could count on her trying to put me out of the way. Accordingly, when I went upstairs, I trumped up a pretext for changing rooms with Sprague, and thus the trap was baited and set, all ready for her ladyship to enter. It seems pretty clear that she walked right into it with her eyes open. As I put the thing together, what happened was something like this: She turned on the gas at two, using the gas-jet in the hall, the tube and the key-hole. Then at four she went into the room, intending to turn on the gas there and make it appear that I had committed suicide. But when she saw what she had done, she decided to let it remain a murder and to vent her rage and hatred by throwing the guilt on my shoulders and having me hanged. That story of hers was a beauty, too. If I hadn't taken such pains with my alibi, I think perhaps she might have got me. Put a woman like that on the witness stand and you'll have the judge

and jury eating out of your hand in five minutes. But, be that as it may," he concluded, "the play is over and the lights are out; and you, my friend, have got the whole story at last. In your report I suppose you'll feel compelled to state that these people died of murder and suicide. But I solemnly believe that in the book of judgment it will be recorded that they were struck down by the hand of God as a punishment for their sins. And now——"

He rose and held out his hand, which the other grasped with a look of sympathy and admiration.

"Before you go," he said, "I wish you'd tell me what your real name is."

"Certainly. It's James Cockburn."

"Ah," said McMartin, "I might have guessed it. No man that didn't have a drop or two of good Scottish blood in his veins could ever have made such a plan and carried it out as you have done. I take off my hat to you, Mr. Cockburn."

A half-hour later the two brothers met on the snow-covered walk in front of the Eagle Hotel.

"Well?" asked Henry.

"Very well indeed," was the reply. "Better than well. We got both of them."

"Ah," said Henry, "I rather thought we would!"

In another minute they had crossed the square and were entering the railway station.

COMMON CARBON FUEL

COAL is a wonderful thing. You probably know this without knowing much about coal except that it is used as fuel and that its price is high. Some men may cry out against giving all the credit to coal, saying the praise should be given to wood because, though many useful things are derived from coal, it was from wood that nature, aided by time, created coal.

You can get a good lesson in coal by standing in front of a glass case at the National Museum at Washington. The glass case is as big as the show window of a store and in the case is a block of coal. Beneath it is a mass of coke derived from that kind of coal and about it are glass containers holding the various things or by-products that are recovered in transforming coal into coke. Among these are coal tar, light oil containing 3 per cent of tar, heavy oil containing 14 per cent of tar, and pitch containing 60 per cent of tar. There is benzol which comes out of the tar and by redistilling the benzol, benzine, xylol and toluol are obtained, the tar being also used in making that military high explosive called tri-nitro-tuluol or TNT. From the benzine the chemists obtain aniline and thus benzine is the parent substance of the numerous aniline dyes, so many artificial perfumes and of various photographic chemicals such as duratol and pyro.

Around the block of coal are other things derived from it, such as ammonia, ammonium sulphate, ammonium nitrate, ammonium carbonate and ammonium chloride. Some of the important things derived from the coal tar, which is derived by "cooking" the coal, are carbolic acid, naphtha, naphthaline, indigo, pyridin, cyanogen and creosote. Most of these substances are split up into numerous other substances which have great uses to man.

And the industry of recovering these things from coal is yet in its infancy. The coke industry in the United States consumes annually in the preparation of metallurgical fuel more than sixty million tons of bituminous coal, and in the United States until recent years, and more especially before the great war, very little attention was given to the recovery of the coal-coke by-products, coke being generally made in the so-called beehive ovens, where the by-products were not recovered.

Coke is obtained by strongly heating coal out of contact with air until the volatile constituents of coal are driven off. It is to coal what charcoal is to wood.

The DECIDING JOB

by Howard Philip Rhoades

AS Tom Dunn, chief of the private police at the big industrial plant of Farrell & Company, ruefully examined the ruins of the big safe, detail by detail, the years of his past rose to greet him—years in which as a star detective of the city's force he had engaged in a remarkable duel of wits with a famous criminal.

Past sixty, his generous frame showing the first traces of age, his broad mustache already white, but his blue eyes alert and his mind as clear as ever, Dunn had just been called in by members of his night force. His conviction that he knew the criminal brought neither exultation nor relief. A weariness at being called upon to take up once more the old sword oppressed him.

But this must instantly be banished. The five years in which he had directed the police of Farrell & Company had been quiet, peaceful ones. This was the first and only job which ever had been "pulled" during his régime. It came this morning as a bomb whose explosion brought to Tom Dunn rudely two significant facts. They were:

He must continue a battle, long considered ended, one which he had waged strenuously back in the days when he had more strength and zest for fight.

His standing as chief of police for Farrell & Company depended upon his handling of this case, for Oliver Farrell, the general manager, expected nothing less than perfect work from everybody.

It was not entirely the thought of losing the generous salary paid him by Farrell & Company, for Tom Dunn had a lieutenant's pension and was virtually independent; nor even the danger of being placed on the shelf as a broken old man, who had passed his day of usefulness, which worried Dunn. There was his son Allan, upon whom he had lavished everything. He dared not fail on account of Allan.

From these thoughts he stiffened with a shock, for Oliver Farrell had arrived. The little group around the big safe, whitened by the explosive, its doors hanging brokenly, fell away as the "big boss" swept in. He was a square-built, vigorous man, who drove the great plant like a dynamo, and who had an intolerance for incompetence which kept every man on his toes.

Tom Dunn realized that for the first time since he had been with Farrell & Company this critical driving quality of the general manager was directed at him. He sensed it in the manner in which Farrell said: "Well, Dunn?"

Back in the edge of the group a clerk

snickered covertly. "I'll say it's well done!" he whispered to a companion.

But the matter was one of tragic importance to Tom Dunn, who was saying: "A serious job, Mr. Farrell. But I'm confident——"

"How did they get in?"

"We're not just sure. The safe was prepared some time previous to the blowing, which seems to have been done from a point clear outside the enclosure by means of an electrical connection."

"Where were you?"

"By your orders, sir, I keep the same daylight hours as the office force. But I frequently drop around at night. In fact, I was here for a short time last evening."

He hesitated, then went on:

"About eight o'clock I was sitting in the garden out there beside the recreation ground. My son Allan came by in his car and wanted me to take a little ride to cool off. He had some work to do here in the office and turned the car over to Corrigan, who drove me. We were gone but a short while."

"But Corrigan was on duty at that time, wasn't he?"

"Yes. But it was early, not yet dark, and other men were left here."

"That's bad, Dunn. We pay our men good wages to be on the job every moment between the time they ring in and ring out. It seems to me that as chief you should not be encouraging any of them to go on joy-rides when they should be on duty."

"True, Mr. Farrell," said Dunn. "But I'm sure his absence had nothing to do with the robbery. We were away but a short time and it was hours before the safe was blown. I can't think it could have been prepared so early in the evening."

"What did they get?"

"The contents of one drawer, twenty thousand dollars in bills. Nothing else was touched. Outside the fact that an excessive charge of explosive was used it was an expert job all the way through. One man must have set it off from the outside, while the other quickly took the money. Corrigan wasn't far from the safe when he heard the noise; yet by the time he got here there wasn't a trace of anybody."

"Have you found any clues of value?"

"I have," said Dunn. "In fact——"

He lowered his voice and glanced warily around. Nobody was near save a pretty young stenographer, already busy over her machine.

"I know the man who at least had a hand in this job," Dunn said. "I'd stake everything I've got that Joe Phelps was in on it."

"Phelps?"

"He's a safe-cracker and a good one. Over a period of fifteen years, while I was on the city force, I arrested him four times. Twice I got convictions. The other two times he was covered so cleverly that I failed to make a case. He's slick as grease, but he must be getting a little careless in his old age. Look at this."

He held up a peculiar shaped brush.

"What is it?" Oliver Farrell asked.

"The thing which more than anything else ties the job to Phelps. He had a method I never saw used by any one else, in which this tool figures. He would wedge and soap a safe, pour in his soup, place his cap, and then paint the soap, even the little cup which they make to hold the soup at the point where they desire to concentrate the force."

"Paint it?"

"Yes, with this brush put on a glossy black paint so that you could stand ten or fifteen feet away from the safe and never see it had been tampered with. Of course we'd never had anything of this sort and when the watchman passes a safe several times nightly for years and nothing happens, he gets so he just takes a glance and——"

"He should have been more careful, Dunn. You all should. The directors will want to know about this. Some of them hold that we spend too much money on policing. I've made a battle for you fellows. But now with this—— Well, Dunn, it'll have to be cleaned up in jig time or I won't answer for what they'll do."

"I see your position, Mr. Farrell. As I know my man——"

"Very well, Dunn. Clear it up at once!"

Farrell turned abruptly and started for his private office. He only paused to beckon the fair-haired, blue-eyed girl who was bending over her typewriter near by to say: "Miss King, will you take dictation, please?" Then

followed by her he entered his private office, and Tom Dunn was alone with his case.

In former days, when convinced that he had another of Joe Phelps's crafty jobs to ferret out, the detective had eagerly seized upon the work as just another episode in his vigorous career. Then it seemed he was working largely for Tom Dunn. True, there was Allan. But then he was a child left by the mother and wife, who had died when he was six. Allan had been taken care of at first by an indulgent aunt and Dunn had turned to the hardest, fastest years of his life.

He always had provided handsomely for Allan. In fact it had come to him in these later years as a saddening thought that at times he may have provided dollars instead of personal attention. Years ago the mischievous vigor of the lad had outgrown the aunt and Allan had been sent to a military school. Thence he went to college and at last to the finest business training school obtainable.

One of Tom Dunn's proudest moments had been when Oliver Farrell, two years before, had greeted young Allan as an employee of Farrell & Company.

"If you're as steady and careful as your father, you're likely to be taking my chair away from me one of these days!" Farrell had said as he heartily gripped the hand of the youth.

How different then his tones than a moment ago beside the smashed safe! Surely Dunn's success or failure on this case was bound to have its effect on the determined head of the company, an effect certain to be reflected on the younger Dunn. So, with a greater realization than ever before that he now was not working for Tom Dunn, as in years past, but for the future of Allan Dunn, the old detective turned toward the office close by where his son served as confidential secretary to Henry Blake, treasurer of Farrell & Company.

Allan's chair was empty. His father was turning away when the younger man pushed through the outer office toward him.

"Dad!" he said. "I'm sorry——"

"That's all right, Al," said Dunn, looking affectionately into the handsome young face, which was quite pale. "Don't worry. The old man's got one more punch in him yet and —he knows who did it!"

"Father!" Young Dunn grasped the door. "I'm——"

"I know you're glad, boy. You thought my foot might be slipping. It isn't. I didn't have to go out of the office to know——"

"Yes—dad——"

"Why, Al, buck up! Don't get so pale or shaky for your old dad! It's just another case—the deciding one—with that fellow I've chased for years. Twice he escaped the pen. Twice I put him away. This one decides, and gives me victory! Joe Phelps is the man, Allan. Joe Phelps!"

"Phelps! Father — you —— " If Allan Dunn had been pale and perturbed before, now he suggested collapse. He sank toward a chair, then rose nervously and stood staring at his father in strange astonishment.

"But, Al, it's nothing! Playing off the rubber with the slickest crook I ever knew. He's as old as I. Now, let's see who's fallen down in his old age."

Allan was gazing at him almost in horror. "But, dad," he said uncertainly. "he's desperate. But I don't believe he did it. He's quit, hasn't he?"

"One moment he's desperate, then he's quit," Dunn cried with a touch of impatience. "Why, boy, it's you that needs a bracer, not your old father! You'd never make a copper. There's nothing to this!"

Allan grasped his arm. "I was thinking of what might happen. If I were you I wouldn't say anything before I knew. Dora—any of them here—might talk, and——"

"My dear boy," said his father, "do you have to teach me the first principles of police business. As a matter of fact we've decided not to tell even the city police until we've had a day or so to work for ourselves. The firm don't want it to get out and I know it's going to be cleaned up in a matter of hours. You'll be proud of your old man in front of your girl, Dora King, and the rest when I make my pinch."

Allan's face was turned away. He was plowing through his mail. Reminded that he had work to do—in a way the biggest job of his life to clear up—Tom Dunn bade his son good-by and plunged into the case. The

morning he spent collecting information regarding the whereabouts and recent history of Joe Phelps.

That afternoon he saw Phelps at a distance working in a machine-shop where he was told by a foreman who never suspected his identity, that Phelps had been a valued employee for several years. Dunn shrugged his shoulders as he departed. That told nothing. Throughout his criminal career Phelps always had held jobs. He obtained from the places where he worked materials for use in his safe-cracking. Further, he stole not because he was afraid of work. His jobs, when not followed by prison sentences, were succeeded by brief periods of extravagant living, during which he spent or gave away his loot. Then he was back in some machine-shop until the desire for an adventure overcame him again.

When would he break away to spend Farrell & Company's twenty thousand? "Never!" Dunn answered as he got on a street car, just before dark, bound for the vicinity of Phelps's home. The house stood in a good district. On a nearby corner was a soft drink establishment where Dunn smoked and gossiped with the proprietor while keeping an eye on the Phelps cottage. The summer twilight was deepening before the detective was rewarded. Down the small terrace in front of the row of cottages came a tall figure—that of the man to whose past some of Dunn's most sensational cases were tied.

Through the dusk Dunn could see that Phelps was thinner. He was almost angular. But he was trying hard to walk erectly, as in other days, and he was clad in gray. Was it a memory, or a prophecy? As he disappeared Dunn looked over at the row of cottages. Once, the veteran detective recalled, Phelps had boldly hidden his loot at home. Might there not now be a chance of something of this sort? Perhaps he could search the place and arrest the man as he returned should he find trace of the stolen money.

He rang the bell of the fourth cottage. Then he repeated the ring. Phelps always had lived alone. Dunn merely desired to make sure this was still the case. He was about to examine the rear of the premises when there was a light and the door opened.

Before the surprised detective stood a girl in white—a girl with hair faintly golden and eyes of blue. Dunn felt that he had made a mistake as he said: "Miss King."

"Mr. Dunn. Won't you come in?"

"Yes, I——" Here was luck! He must have gotten in the wrong house to find, living next-door to the wanted man, Dora King, one of Farrell & Company's best stenographers, incidentally a girl so bright and attractive that he was glad to know her as the sweetheart of his son Allan.

As the door closed he said to her in a low, confidential tone: "In which house does Joe Phelps live, Miss King?"

She was surprised as she repeated: "In which house? Why, here!"

"Here! But you——"

"I am his daughter."

There was a pause. Then she put out her hand to the detective, who had sunk back into a chair. "I was afraid, Mr. Dunn," she said, "afraid for the moment when you learned this. But if you can only understand. Things have changed."

"Changed—how?"

"Father sees where he was wrong. Mother used to tell him when he was younger, more bent on taking chances. He didn't see then. But now——"

"I don't understand your being here."

"It's this way," she explained with an eagerness. "Father and mother disagreed about his misdeeds. They separated. She brought me up under her maiden name, Dora King. All the years you knew him we lived elsewhere. Mother died when he was in prison the last time. When he got out he came to me and convinced me that he was finished."

"Finished!" Dunn scoffed. "You tell me this and—go with my son!"

"Allan didn't know at first. We had met at the office. When he did know I begged him to tell you. But he has delayed. He believes as I do about father."

"He knew and didn't tell me," Dunn said, as if to himself. "Where's your father?"

"Gone to meet a man at the drugstore two blocks down. He's to be there at nine. But please, Mr. Dunn, wait here until he comes back. I——"

"No. I'll go."

"But you mustn't. There's something I—we—must tell you!"

In her eyes Dunn saw the desire to protect the guilty man. Certain he was on the right track he made one play to see if she could communicate with her father before he reached him.

"If you have a telephone I'll call him and wait," he said.

"There's none nearer than the corner."

"I'll go then," he said, and asked more details regarding the drugstore to which Dora King said her father had gone. Out of her sight he almost ran. While he might remain to break her down Joe Phelps could be escaping. To get Phelps first, then handle the girl afterwards, should be his course.

Dunn approached the drugstone which she had described. It was ten minutes past nine. What if she had steered him wrongly? He was calling himself a fool, easily misled, when he made out, through the side-window, the tall figure of Joe Phelps slowly pacing the floor. There were three entrances to the place, which was well-lighted. Outside the dark hung heavily. Dunn wondered why he had come on such an errand without help. Before starting he had hesitated to bring any one away from the plant with him until actually needed, and as yet the local police had not been called into the case.

Now he began to see the danger of tracking Phelps so closely alone. He determined that, should the man inside approach a telephone he would at once close in and arrest him. Yet chances were Phelps was awaiting some pal with whom he might be going to a place where they had hidden the money. So he had better merely continue to shadow Phelps for the present.

For some time longer Phelps moved about the store with growing nervousness. Again and again he would peer into the street. At last he appeared to reach a decision to leave. Half a block behind Dunn followed. Phelps's course was toward a broad avenue lined with fine old residences. Some distance down this thoroughfare he turned into a yard and made his way back to a very large house which stood dimly in the darkness. It was a place Dunn knew by reputation.

He nodded cynically. He had been right about the falseness of the girl's story, he thought. The fact that Phelps went to such a place proved that. As his quarry entered the house Dunn paused at the gate, again in a quandary. Would Phelps be able to communicate with his daughter, and be warned? Dare he leave his post long enough to summon aid?

Again he decided merely to wait. Phelps might not call the girl. She might not have known where he was going. Again, if Dunn had all the police in town at his disposal he knew he could not get into the house quickly enough to get anything more than Phelps himself. The establishment was guarded, barricaded and fitted with all the concealment places and elaborate systems of warning known to the modern gambling house.

He chose a situation well within the shadows. He was ready for a long wait. But it was not necessary. Five minutes had not passed when two figures came from the door. On the sidewalk they became clearer. Between him and the light beyond they were limned distinctly. One was the tall, angular figure of Joe Phelps. The other was a slightly shorter man with a bag.

Exultantly Tom Dunn took up the scent. So far things seemed to have been made to order for him. But he realized that matters were momentarily becoming harder for him to cope with single-handedly. Where once there was Joe Phelps alone, he now was trailing two men. What was worse, the man he most wanted was not even the one carrying the bag!

The pair was half a block ahead. Suddenly they stepped into a side street and into a waiting machine. Dunn, who had quickened his steps, arrived just in time to catch the roar of the engine and see the car get under way. Two blocks down in the direction in which the car had started, which was the direction of Phelps's home, was a busy corner. Perhaps there he might find a taxi. Always with an eye on the machine ahead Dunn ran in that direction. He was lucky enough to find a car, and to gain sight of the motor in which Phelps was riding just as it turned off toward the latter's home.

Certain Phelps had gone home, Dunn stopped his car at the corner whence he orig-

inally had watched Phelps's cottage. He could no longer delay in getting assistance. It was between his own men and the city police. As the plant was less than two miles off, and he still hesitated to call upon the local authorities, he decided to send for his own men. They could speedily go back to their posts, he felt, for the robbery was about to be cleared up.

Explaining that he wanted two of his watchmen, Corrigan and Jenkins, to surround the cottage which he indicated, and to stop anybody coming out, he ordered the chauffeur to bring the men with all speed. Now, before the arrival of his men Dunn found himself with the biggest contract of his career on his hands. He must close in and single-handedly guard the place. Realizing he was undertaking far more than even the most sanguine of detectives would have taken on, he did not hesitate. His success so far was a great encouragement, while some strange intuition bade him on with the case forthwith.

He had expected drawn blinds at the Phelps home; darkness from which Phelps and his companion might try momentarily to escape. The small automatic which had seen him through many a pinch in his hand, Dunn approached. But where he had expected dark secrecy, he was surprised to find a light in the front room and the blinds half up. Inside, in plain sight, were Joe Phelps and his daughter.

Dunn crept closer. Softly he stepped upon the porch. The door was a glass one, lightly curtained. He covered Phelps easily as he paused to look. One moment he strained his eyes, caught one more detail and knew the time to enter had come. As he rang, revolver on Phelps's heart, the man he had pursued so many years stirred nervously. But he only rose slowly while the girl opened the door.

His gun leveled, the detective entered. Without a word he stooped swiftly and snatched from the floor the bag which he had seen the other man carrying.

"Open it!" he commanded the girl sharply.

As she did so he leaned slightly to see a dozen or more fat rolls of green bills.

"Phelps," he said, striving to control the tremulous tone in his voice— "Phelps, I arrest you for the robbery at Farrell & Company."

There was a sob from the girl. Joe Phelps said in a quiet, suppressed way: "Mr. Dunn, the money is here, every cent. The money's what they want most, I guess. If I can just explain. Isn't there some way this can be fixed without an arrest? It'll only cause heartaches."

"Heartaches!" Dunn's lip curled with a trace of the scorn with which he always had regarded certain crooks he had met—criminals with yellow streaks.

"Heartaches!" he repeated. "Joe, what kind of a guy are you turning out in your old age? I always knew you as a man, ready to take his medicine—not a whiner! Here I ask myself whether I'm still man enough to peg your work and go out and pick you up. And when I do I find you whining about heartaches. You're a quitter, Joe. Hold them up, old gopher-hound. Come, take the nippers. I win the rub, Joe. I win!"

Slowly Phelps raised his hands.

"Father!" the girl sobbed. "You mustn't—you——"

"No," said the tall, gray-haired man, gently putting her aside, "I'll go."

Into the tense silence came a low sound, like a moan, from the room beyond. His gun hand twitching nervously, Tom Dunn shifted a little so that the revolver covered not only Phelps but the room beyond. Everything had played into his hand so perfectly in this, his big hour, that nothing was too much for him to handle.

"Another damn whiner, eh?" he cried. "Come out!"

There was a sound as if a man sobbing was slowly approaching the door. Then Dunn recoiled, weak and gasping. Approaching, his hands up as if to receive the handcuffs, was his own son, Allan!

"I did it," he said, hardly above a whisper. "Put them on me!"

As Dunn choked, Phelps drew the boy aside. "Allan," he said, "you shouldn't. I——"

"Mr. Phelps, you didn't think I'd allow——"

"Why not? I've been there. Of course I'd expected to explain. But your father wouldn't hear and it came to me."

"No," shuddered Allan, "I'm weak — and

wrong — and coming out of that room was slow, hard work. But please don't think——"

"That's all right, boy," said Phelps. "Now, Mr. Dunn——"

"Go on," said the detective, dull-eyed, the gray of added years weighing down his stooping shoulders.

"Allan here recently asked me about safe-blowing. I told him all I knew."

"You schooled — encouraged my son!"

"Would *you* have refused Tom Dunn's son such knowledge? But he didn't ask you. That wasn't his habit. If you'd encouraged him to confide more in you, Mr. Dunn, he'd never have asked either of us this."

"I know I've things to answer for," said Dunn, bitterly. "But you—you allowed him to associate with your daughter!"

"They became attached to each other at the plant before I knew who he was. She's even more than the woman her mother was. For her sake, as well as for yours, it's hurt me to find Allan a safe-cracker and gambler."

"A gambler! You——"

"Yes, father," said Allan, "I made small beginnings, but kept losing. I started this week two thousand dollars in the hole. I had to cover. I got the idea of taking the money from the safe, then blowing it that night to make it look like an outside job. Casually I asked Mr. Phelps, and he of course never suspecting for a moment told me all I wanted to know."

"Allan, you did this to your poor old dad!"

"Mr. Dunn," said Phelps, his hand on the shoulder of his ancient enemy, "there's good in the midst of this. Listen: Allan had the combination. His boss is on his vacation. Allan was last out that night. He brought the entire contents of one drawer away. It was more than he needed, but he knew robbers wouldn't crack a safe and take only part of the cash. He kept the money right at your house that night, going back in the evening, contriving to get you and Corrigan away while he prepared the safe, using my method, by which you can put in the soup several hours before you puff her off. He strung her with the wire, got it outside in place, then painted her. Your man Corrigan went past several times, but didn't see."

"But there's no good in all that," said Dunn, shaking his head.

"Wait! It didn't fully dawn upon him the position he'd placed you in until morning. It worried him all that day, and in the evening drove him to Dora—partly crying for what he'd done to his father, partly begging her to run away with him. She listened and advised him just as my poor wife used to advise me. He heeded. He consented to talk it over with me, and left word he'd meet me at nine. Meanwhile he got to worrying about the two thousand dollars he was short. He couldn't resist the temptation to try to get it back. He plunged and, with luck and the twenty thousand behind him, he succeeded. Here, Mr. Dunn, is the best part."

The old detective slightly raised his head.

Phelps went on: "I got afraid and started after Allan. I met him coming downstairs from the gambling room. He had had the moral courage to stop when he won back the two thousand, and was starting out with it. Your boy had won his battle, Tom Dunn! So much for what he learned since taking the money. Consider his case beforehand: At an age when I was having fun bucking the law and you starting to chase me, here he is tied down in an office doing the humdrum work of a clerk. A boy with red blood wants his fling at adventure and excitement, doesn't he? How easy, with nobody older to talk it over with him, to get into gambling as a means of excitement. Then, needing the money, and still hungry for bigger chance-taking, he tries to get away with this robbery. He's not deliberately bad, Tom Dunn, just misled. And he's had his lesson!"

Dunn slowly stretched out his hand to the youth with bowed head. "Allan!" he said.

"Daddy!" sobbed the boy, pressing against his tear-stained cheek the great hand which had sent many a man beyond the penitentiary's brink. Father and son stood for a moment, stripped of the years, as if again beside the bier of a mother and wife who might have bound them closer had she lived. Dunn was mourning his neglected responsibilities. Allan was silently weeping for a father lost to him these many years, but found again!

There was a ring. Dunn found Corrigan, revolver in hand, awaiting him. "I saw you

inside, sir," the watchman said. "The house is surrounded. Jenkins is at the rear."

For a moment only Dunn was puzzled. Then he said: "I guess the chauffeur mistook what I said. I was just over here seeing a man who was helping me. The house to be surrounded is out in the country and I've just had word they're not coming for the stuff until to-morrow night. Get Jenkins and we'll be going back."

Only once Dunn glanced from his son to Phelps, then at the bag on the floor. After that he strode off into the darkness, followed by his men.

For close to three hours, on the following evening, Dunn lay in the deep shadows near a deserted house in the country, commanding a force of half a dozen men. Finally he said he guessed they were not coming that evening, and with guns drawn the posse closed in and triumphantly took the bag containing $20,000 from a cubby-hole in the attic. Allan Dunn and Joe Phelps, who secretly had placed it there about dark and stood guard for a time, went home by another route.

Corrigan and Jenkins grew tired watching the place on subsequent evenings, and Tom Dunn felt a lump in his throat every time he urged them to be diligent in their watch for the crooks — the same sort of lump which came when he took the money back to Oliver Farrell and heard the latter's thanks and praise for his quick work.

"Guess they knew who was after them and were afraid to come back!" smiled the general manager appreciatively. "Well, Dunn, this makes us all feel pretty good, even if we didn't get the crooks."

"Yes, sir," said Dunn, finally banishing the lump. "And it comes right along with another good piece of news. I'm feeling pretty fine over my son's engagement to a mighty nice little girl here in the office—the daughter of an old friend of mine!"

AMBER SUPERSTITIONS

MOST precious stones, from the Hope diamond downward, have some superstition connected with them, and that particularly beautiful jewel, amber, is by no means behindhand in this respect.

The ancient Romans believed amber to contain most valuable medicinal qualities. Children wore it as an amulet, and it was considered to be entirely efficacious against insanity, either taken internally in the form of a powder or worn around the neck.

It was also supposed, when worn around the neck, to be a cure for ague and to act as a defence against chills; ground up with honey and rose-oil it was regarded as a specific for deafness, and ground with honey alone as a certain cure for dimness of sight.

In many parts of Europe, even in these more enlightened times, amber is still considered to bring good health to its wearer, and though some people say that it is an unlucky stone there are far more who think that it is exactly the reverse.

Most women yearn passionately nowadays for an amber necklace. One has every respect for this most laudable desire on the part of the wiser sex, and it is interesting to think that amber was the very first precious stone made use of for the purposes of personal adornment. Homer mentions "the gold necklace hung with bits of amber" which was offered by the Phœnician trader to the Queen of Syra (Odyssey, IV. 460), and it is to be seen to-day, beautifully carved, in some of the most ancient specimens of Etruscan jewelry.

The color of the genuine article is perhaps reproduced nowhere else in nature. Its beauty has been applauded through the ages.

Nero in one of his verses to Poppæa's hair described it as of an amber shade, evidently intending to pay a very high compliment to the beautiful Empress, and hair of this color straightway became all the fashion among the high-born ladies of Poppæa's court, who, if it did not grow naturally upon their own heads, donned imported wigs stolen from the female savages of Great Britain and Germany.

The IMMORTALIZER

by

Eva Pittaro

DR. EARNSHAW and Dr. Lowe stood beside the hospital bed where Margaret lay, apparently unconscious. They were holding a consultation, the purport of which was: "Shall we or shall we not operate?"

"If we could only invent an immortalizer so that the patient could not die," said Dr. Earnshaw, stroking his short gray beard, "we could patch them up in fine shape. We would not have the worry about the risk of losing them. No fear of septic poisoning. Death could be held at bay and we could save all cases that came to us. Even the condition of this girl would not worry us."

"Why don't you go ahead and invent one?" asked Dr. Lowe, still examining Margaret. "Pretty girls always will go joy-riding. It's such a pity to think of them all broken up or else but poorly mended."

A nurse approached, ready for orders.

"When was she brought in?" Dr. Lowe asked.

The nurse looked at Margaret, then at him. Dr. Lowe answered her unspoken question. "She won't hear you. She's absolutely unconscious."

"She was brought in fifteen minutes ago. Automobile accident. Philipsbourne is the name of the man with her. He's in ward 27." She shrugged her shoulders, expressive of his slender chance of life.

"Is the operating room ready for us?"

"Yes, doctor."

"What shall we do?" he asked Dr. Earnshaw.

"Take her in," the older man answered.

Weeks later Margaret was in Dr. Earnshaw's country place, partly to recuperate and partly because the detective agency which employed her had sent her there on the trail of Philipsbourne, who was expected to visit the old doctor on an important mission.

The old couple treated her like a member of the family and she in turn did what she could to help Mrs. Earnshaw about the house, for she had grown very fond of them.

The house was pleasant, in spite of its mystery. Dr. Earnshaw's study, like Bluebeard's chamber, was kept locked with a very efficient burglar-proof lock. No one was ever admitted to the room except Mrs. Earnshaw, who kept it in order for the doctor. It was hard for Margaret to reconcile this mystery with the seeming straightforwardness of the old doctor until she discovered that he had some strange invention on which he was working and which he wanted no one to see until it was perfected, a device to make people im-

mune to death, which he called the immortalizer.

Dr. Earnshaw spent most of his time in his study, while his wife puttered in the garden, or else she would go for long rambles in the woods. She avoided the highroads whenever she could, for she had an inordinate fear of automobiles and knew, so she said, that some day she would be killed by one. To this statement the doctor invariably answered: "Even if they cut you in half with their wheels, my dear Corinne, I shall patch you up. Death is something we do not fear, you and I." And he would pat her hand and both would smile knowingly at each other.

One morning, just when Margaret had made up her mind that the Earnshaw establishment was of no interest whatever to the detective agency, Philipsbourne called to see the doctor. He was tall, well built, with a kind of diabolic beauty, and seemed to have entirely recovered from his accident.

Margaret went to the study to summon Dr. Earnshaw. Hardly had he opened the door than Philipsbourne, who had noiselessly followed Margaret, stepped past her into the forbidden room.

Dr. Earnshaw was utterly taken aback at his impertinence.

"Let us go out onto the porch," he suggested.

"Let us stay right here," Philipsbourne countered insolently as he slammed the door shut. "This suits me exactly."

Margaret, unable to help the doctor, decided that at least she would see what was going on in the study. You never could tell what might happen. Very carefully she passed her hand along the door panel and presently she discovered the original keyhole. She dug the filling out with a hairpin, creating a veritable window through which she could look into the study.

Philipsbourne had seated himself well to one side of the room, for the centre was occupied by the immortalizer, the doctor's invention. She gasped when she saw it, it was so beautiful and yet so uncanny.

It looked very much like a large cake of ice, only with this difference, that it was shaded from utter transparency at the edges through all the most vivid colors of the rainbow to the centre, which seemed to be a ball of purple flame. From here copper wires protruded which were connected with angular metal stools on either side of the block.

"So that's your invention?" Philipsbourne remarked after he, too, had taken in all the details. "You can rule the world with that. You can get all the millionaires and kings and everybody to bow down before you and lick your boots."

"I suppose I could."

"The whole of Klondike is not worth a cent compared with that invention of yours. I see where you'll be on Easy Street, all right, all right—a multi-billionaire."

"Possibly," answered Dr. Earnshaw quietly. It was the calm of a man who knows that if he gives way to his emotion the end will be nothing less than murder. "But that is not the way I intend to use my invention. I seek only to give immortality to those who would be of real benefit to the world."

"Such as you and your wife." Philipsbourne said the words unemotionally, which made the insult the greater. Dr. Earnshaw looked at him sternly.

"I am the inventor—the only man who can apply it, and a man without his wife is not even half a man." He cleared his throat, shifted his feet, then added: "Was your object in coming here to insult me?"

"No harm meant. I came because I have a really good business proposition to make to you; that is to say, if this immortalizer of yours really is any good. I am at liberty at present and am offering you my services, to take care of the financial end."

His calm impudence was superb as he leaned comfortably back in his chair, but the doctor had come to the end of his patience.

"You entered this room," he said, rising, "without my permission. I now request you to leave it." He pointed to the door.

Philipsbourne rose unconcernedly. "Is that the way you feel about it? All right, I'll humor you. At least I have found out pretty well what the immortalizer looks like. When I feel the time has come, I shall give a description of it to the public. Then we'll see whether or not you'll need an agent."

He approached the door. Margaret, still on her knees before the keyhole, rose hurried-

ly, walking quickly toward the kitchen. When she heard the door open she turned, thereby creating the impression that she had just come from the kitchen.

"When the time comes," Dr. Earnshaw said, holding the door open for the other to pass through, "you'll probably find yourself in jail, my friend." He motioned to Margaret to show Philipsbourne out.

While Margaret was preparing supper late that afternoon she noticed that the house trembled slightly. Mrs. Earnshaw had been gone some time on her walk in the woods and would be back shortly. The doctor was in his study as usual.

The doorbell rang. Margaret went to answer it, and admitted Dr. Lowe and his beautiful young wife, Edith. The faces of both were flushed, their eyes unnaturally brilliant, as if they labored under some excitement.

Dr. Earnshaw, who evidently had been waiting for them, came from his study to greet them.

"Is everything ready?" the young doctor asked eagerly.

"Everything. We can begin at once."

"This gift of immortality. Just think of it, Edith, you and I shall never be parted by death! Can you realize what that means? What a wedding gift! Truly the greatest thing on earth one man can give to another."

"Yes, it certainly is wonderful," answered Edith. "But I don't understand it at all. It doesn't hurt, does it?"

"No, it does not hurt."

"You don't mind explaining, do you, Dr. Earnshaw?" she asked, putting her hand on his arm. "For instance, why is it that Arthur is immortalized, as you call it, first, and why am I needed for that?"

"The reason, my dear, is that the first example of any given thing, my invention for instance, is not perfect. It has one very serious drawback. Each subject, in this case your dear husband, needs a second, another person to carry forth the current of his life. In other words, I aim to establish a chain without a break."

They entered the study, then stood still before the immortalizer, gazing at its wonderful colors, which shone more brilliantly than before.

"But I can still die, after the experiment?" she asked.

"Yes. And if, let us say for the sake of argument, you die to-morrow, your husband is no longer immortal, because he has lost his second. My wife, however, whose second he is, cannot die before he does. You see, when I first applied this current to a human being I was the first. Not from any selfish motive, but because it might have killed me. Then again, I suffer from an incurable heart disease, as you know. One more attack and I no longer would be alive. This work, on which I have labored for the greater part of thirty years, would be lost."

"And who is your second?"

"Corinne, of course. And Arthur here," he put an affectionate arm on the young man's shoulder, "was her second. Now it is your privilege to carry forward the current of his life, and we must find a worthy man to be your second. And so the chain shall be become endless. Just think, my dear, some day, when you have children of your own, you will not have to worry about losing them, for of course you will bring them to me. There shall be no small mound for any of yours, where you will have to bury part of your heart."

Dr. Earnshaw pulled down the shades, adjusted the wires, and motioned to the two to sit on either side of the curious block, which immediately began to glow.

Margaret, who was once more at her post before the keyhole, forgot that her knees ached with the wonder of what she was seeing.

Dr. Earnshaw stood beyond her line of vision, but she could see Dr. Lowe and his wife in their respective chairs.

Presently their bodies appeared to turn to glass, to become transparent. Then their flesh and clothes vanished until their skeletons only were visible, two human skeletons, sitting opposite each other, their ribs expanding and contracting as they breathed.

Two purplish vapors formed between them, gradually taking the human shape. They passed and repassed through each other, clasped the other's shoulders and gyrated slowly above the immortalizer with its rainbow glow.

Little by little they turned faster, and as

they did so the house trembled to its very foundations.

Faster and faster they turned until they were as one, while the skeletons remained as they had been, their ribs expanding and contracting with their breathing.

A picture fell from the wall. This so startled Margaret that she fled headlong down the hall. She slammed the kitchen door to shut out the terror, but when she saw her pots and pans waving to and fro on the wall, propelled no doubt by the shaking of the house, she fled still farther into the garden, and from there into the woods.

She slowed down gradually, the wholesome aspect of the woods calming her nerves. She realized now why Mrs. Earnshaw had stayed out so long. The dear lady probably did not like the manifestation and had wisely gone where she would not witness it.

As she neared the highway she heard the honking of an automobile horn, a shriek, an abrupt stop; then the car started quite suddenly, and went tearing down the road.

Something impelled Margaret to run forward through the bushes. When she came to the road she could see the rear wheels of the car disappear around the curve.

She glanced down at her feet, then clapped her hands to her mouth so as not to shriek aloud in her horror. There in the weeds lay the body of Mrs. Earnshaw, one side of her face gone, her white hair turning red as the blood oozed through it.

Margaret bent down, thinking her dead. She could see, upon looking closer, that part of the skull had been lifted off, exposing the brain.

She summoned all her courage to put her hand over the other woman's heart. It was still beating. The immortalizer was doing its work!

Margaret lifted the body gently and dragged it as well as she could into the bushes, fighting an inclination to faint. From the road she took a few handfuls of dust which she threw upon the stain of blood. Then she ran along the path, not heeding the brambles which tore at her skirts and scratched her hands.

When she reached the house she made her way straight to the doctor's study. She could hear Dr. Lowe and his wife talking excitedly as she reached it.

"Mrs. Earnshaw is down by the road," she called through the door. "She wants Doctor Earnshaw to come to her."

The young couple took this as their cue to leave, elated by what had just happened to them. Dr. Earnshaw followed wonderingly into the hall.

"My wife did not come home?" he asked in astonishment, after the outer door had closed on the other two.

"No. She is—she is down by the road."

"Yes?"

"The news I have to give you is not good. She is hurt, but she is not dead. An automobile ran over her and hurt her badly."

The doctor was too horrified to speak. He followed dumbly as Margaret led the way.

When they reached the place, he knelt down beside his wife, overcome with grief.

He instructed Margaret how to hold her in order to help him carry her to the house, where they laid her on the bed.

He turned to Margaret.

"You will have to help me in this. At any rate I won't lose her, my Corinne."

He gave Margaret the keys to his study. "Go get my case, hot water, and whatever else I may tell you. If only it were not Corinne, I would welcome this chance to test my invention. And yet the mere fact that she lives proves its value."

Margaret obeyed the orders given her. The doctor gave her final instructions:

"If any one comes now, before we are through, you are not to answer the door. I want no interference. And if to-morrow you are asked, you may tell them Mrs. Earnshaw has gone to her sister's. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir, I understand."

"The game is half won already. Death should have been instantaneous, and she lives—she lives!"

As soon as Dr. Earnshaw had bandaged his wife and done the utmost that he could for her, he went to his study.

There Margaret found him later, lying on the floor, apparently unconscious. The shock of his wife's accident had brought on another heart attack.

The girl looked about the room in search

of something with which to relieve the doctor. Not knowing what to do, she phoned to Dr. Lowe to come and help.

The young doctor arrived shortly. He worked over his friend some time, at last succeeding in bringing him back to normal.

He was enthusiastic over his success and the success of the immortalizer. "That's the second time you did not die," he said. "What a satisfaction it must be to you to know that you have triumphed over death. Mankind will never be able to pay its debt to you!"

For two weeks Dr. Earnshaw attended his wife, but she grew no better under his care. Dr. Lowe called several times on a personal matter, so he said, looking much worried. Each time he was told that Dr. Earnshaw could not be disturbed. Finally he stayed away for three days.

During this time the old doctor became haggard with worry. Margaret did what she could for him, attended him as if he had been her own father, for she had grown to love him as such. She began to understand the terrible tragedy he had created for himself.

Mrs. Earnshaw was moved into the study. She did not suffer, that was the doctor's only consolation. She did not suffer, but she could not die. That which had seemed the one end to be desired was now a curse, for the doctor was powerless to cure her. Had he been able to waken her from her stupor, he knew that she would have been violently insane.

When things had reached this hopeless state, Edith called, but the man with her was not her husband, but Philipsbourne. He entered the hall and stood waiting for Margaret to announce his presence as if there never had been any doubt of his welcome.

Dr. Earnshaw emerged from his study, haggard, a decided stoop to his shoulders. He hardly greeted Edith.

She did not seem to notice the change, being interested only in what concerned her.

"You said I was to bring a worthy second for myself, doctor," she proclaimed smilingly. "Mr. Philipsbourne is willing to assist me in this little matter. When I heard he was a friend of yours, I brought him right over. Wasn't I lucky to get him?"

"A friend of mine? No, my dear Edith, not a friend."

Philipsbourne shrugged his shoulders. "We had a little misunderstanding at my previous visit," he explained to Edith.

Dr. Earnshaw put out his hand to silence him.

"Never mind," he said. "That does not matter. The only thing that really matters is that the immortalizer is doing its work only too well. I cannot die, my wife cannot die."

"Of course you can't. That's what an immortalizer is for!" put in Philipsbourne jocosely. "But tell me, doctor, did you try?"

The doctor's face looked ashen. He went as far as his study, put his hand on the knob, but did not open the door.

"Yes," he said slowly, "I did try. But I cannot die. And Corinne, whom I have in here, cannot die. I shall show you presently what that means. I shall remove her bandages so that you can see her face, her poor, mutilated face. Then you will know why it is that I cannot do your bidding. You yourselves will pray to me not to tamper with your lives."

He opened the door. Philipsbourne entered immediately, but Edith held back.

"Come in, Edith," Dr. Earnshaw called. "It is the only way you will learn what is good for you." He passed his hand across his forehead. "To think my poor Corinne should end like this."

The door-bell rang violently. Margaret went to answer it. Dr. Lowe stood there, but not the gay young husband of a few weeks ago. His face was singularly bloated, his eyes protruded.

He caught Margaret's hand to stop himself from falling. She assisted him to the bench under the hatrack. After he had rested a few moments, he suffered her to lead him to the study.

As soon as the door opened, he rushed forward, forgetting his weakness of a moment ago.

"Look what you have done to me!" he cried. "I have taken enough strychnine to kill fifteen men, and yet I did not die, and the gun in my pocket is useless. Did you hear? I did not die!"

"My dear boy, why should you wish to die? What would your charming wife do without you?"

"Charming wife!" Dr. Lowe fairly yelled. "And you say that to me, you, who let her into this house a few minutes ago with her lover? That is why I came here, to kill her!"

The old doctor stepped back a few paces, as if he could thereby ward off tragedy. Then he clapped his hand to his heart. Another attack was coming on.

Dr. Lowe, misinterpreting the movement, rushed forward into the study. He saw Mrs. Earnshaw on the couch, her face hardly visible beneath its bandages. He saw the immortalizer, still wonderful in its colors, but he did not see those whom he sought.

A rustling sound back of him attracted his attention. He turned and perceived Edith crouched beside the bookcase; Philipsbourne stood beside her. Dr. Lowe realized that in his eagerness to find them he had rushed past them.

In a flash he whipped out his gun. A shot rang out. Philipsbourne pitched forward, dead. Two more bullets lodged with deadly certainty in Edith's breast.

Hardly did she breathe her last than Dr. Lowe, whose second she was, succumbed to the poison he had taken.

The current of his life gone, Dr. Earnshaw was at last overcome by his heart disease, thereby releasing his wife from her terrible existence.

When Margaret heard the shots, she came running. Terrified, she bent over one body after the other. All five of them dead, within the compass of a second. What should she do?

She felt dazed at the horror of it, and yet she could not let things remain as they were.

She gazed at the immortalizer a moment, as if it might solve the problem. It was glowing, gradually becoming brilliant. The house began to tremble.

It seemed to her that a mist gathered above the immortalizer, from which a shadowy hand pointed downward.

She understood. Seizing one of the metal stools nearest her, she swung it above her head and brought it down with a crash on the immortalizer. The impact stunned her. She lost consciousness.

Somebody was slapping her face. She opened her eyes and looked straight into those of Dr. Earnshaw. Dr. Lowe was standing close behind him.

"I thought you both were dead," she murmured.

"You mean we thought you were. But don't you worry. Your operation was a great success. You'll be ready for another joy-ride pretty soon."

FISH DRINK MILK

FRANK SHELP of Doster, Mich., who owns a large herd of Jersey cows, has solved the mystery of what happened to his daily supply of milk for some time recently. Shelp says that when, after the herd had been driven in from the fields at night, he found just about half of the cows had been milked dry, he thought that either gypsies or summer campers along the shore of Pine Lake were to blame for the wholesale theft.

Farm hands watched the kine for a week, but could find no evidence of thefts, but all said that during the afternoon for some reason the milk disappeared. Shelp himself gave up other duties and started to watch the kine. He found that in the afternoon they would go down to the lake to bathe and drink, standing hip deep in the water. It was on one of these trips, he says, that he saw a big fish swim up to the cow and drink her milk. Other fish followed.

Amazed, Shelp says, he knew no one would believe him, and he called summer boarders at the farm to witness the performance. Next a seine was secured and the fish in the basin scooped out. It was found that suckers abounded there, some weighing as much as ten pounds. When he cut open the stomach of several of the fish it was revealed they had participated in the milk orgies.

At TWELVE-THIRTY SHARP

by

S. Gordon Gurwit

THE burglar walked briskly up the quiet street, swinging his cane and smiling as he puffed at his cigarette. Just two blocks below he had met an officer, who had taken in his fashionable clothes and had nodded respectfully. He evidently had judged him to be one of the wealthy residents of the neighborhood, judging by his obsequious obeisance.

At the corner the burglar paused and glanced around. The street was deserted. He looked at his watch. It was just eleven-thirty. Retracing his steps and keeping in the shadows, he came to a pause in front of a handsome residence set back some distance from the walk. Again he looked keenly about, but not a soul was visible. The trees sighed and rustled in the faint breeze, here and there a flickering arc-lamp conjured up weird shadows; somewhere in the far distance a car went rumbling and clanging on its way.

Silently he made his way to one of the windows, where he examined the catches and a moment later it swung up. With infinite caution the burglar stepped through into the cavernous darkness of the room beyond. Once inside, he stood, statue-like, listening, but not a sound greeted his straining faculties. A brief flash penetrated the darkness and gave him his bearings. Through the doorway, he stepped into the hall, then cautiously made his way up the flight of stairs that stretched dimly before him. Reaching the top, he tiptoed silently down the hall. At the extreme end of the hall he paused before a door.

"This must be the room," he told himself, "according to the way I dope it out." Then, with a little intake of his breath, he tried the door. It swung open at his touch.

A night-light burned dimly on a handsome period vanity case in one corner of the room.

"That's where the stuff is, most likely," the burglar told himself.

He made his way to the vanity case and noiselessly opened the top drawer, then suddenly he straightened up and whirled about. What was that? That noise! A stifled oath died on his lips, while his hand flew to his pocket significantly. There was some one in that dark far corner!

Instinctively he crouched close to the floor and waited. How long he stayed in that attitude he never knew, but at length, driven by desperation to action, he advanced slowly upon the corner that threatened him, his ugly automatic held ready for instant action.

The breathing he had heard at first continued, and he made out the form of a young

girl, fast asleep, on a chaise longue, one white arm supporting the head, the other trailing to the floor. She was sound asleep, of that there could be no question. As he intently surveyed her the burglar's eyes contained a flicker of admiration. Her bosom rose and fell regularly and his eyes caught the glint of a jewel that hung upon her neck. With a touch as light as the night wind in the trees he removed the jewel from his unconscious victim.

For perhaps a minute he stood looking at her, then convinced that she was fast asleep and would not waken unless he made sufficient noise, he made his way back to the other side of the room. Searching silently through the drawers of the vanity case he finally drew forth a small leather wallet. One glance at the flashing, scintilating contents sufficed him.

"Baby!" he told his soul gleefully. "Some rocks! Now, I guess I'll blow while the gettin' is good!" His eyes strayed toward the sleeping girl. "Some little pippin!" he commented to himself. "Mighty good-lookin' kid. If I wasn't a gentleman, who can tell what might happen. Oh, well, on your way, Dicky, old sport!"

He stepped out into the hall, then, quaking in every fibre, he came back into the room, for he had heard the street door close sharply. Some one was coming up the stairs! He looked about him desperately, like a rat in a trap, his breath coming fast. His escape was cut off. Where could he hide? His feverish eyes roamed the room helplessly. Behind those portieres! It was the only visible place —his only chance. Some one was coming down the hall now toward the door. He slipped in behind the portieres and waited, his pulsing blood hammering in every vein.

Almost immediately a young man entered the room and glanced around. He laid his hat and coat upon a chair and pressed the wall button that flooded the room with light. Then he walked over to the sleeping girl and stood silently regarding her, his hands in his trousers pockets, his face an odd mixture of tenderness and bitterness. The burglar moistened his dry lips and waited.

For what seemed an eternity the man stood and looked at the sleeping girl, then in a curiously throaty voice he said:

"Adele!"

The girl stirred, stretched and opened her eyes. She looked full at the man and raised her delicate brows.

"You, Will?" she said. "I fell asleep here waiting for you. What makes you so late? What time is it?"

"It's about twelve," the man answered. "I'm glad you're up. There's something I want to talk to you about."

"So I gathered from your telephone message," rather coldly. "Otherwise I wouldn't have waited. What is it?"

There was a sense of antagonism and constraint in the room. The man's face flushed suddenly.

"Adele," he began, "let's not misunderstand one another. We've been married five years and we've been drifting apart further every minute of that time. We must come to some understanding. This can't go on. I'm head over heels in debt and you keep pushing me in farther. I might say that my income for the next two years is mortgaged."

The girl stared blankly.

"In—debt?" she repeated, bewildered.

"Yes."

For some little time she searched his face, her fingers unconsciously twisting her gown.

"Well!" she said at length. "Am I to understand that we've been living on borrowed money?"

"My income didn't seem to be enough!" he responded bitterly.

"Is that my fault?" she asked harshly. "You claim to be clever and yet you don't make any money. Why blame it on me? I don't see——"

"Adele——"

"Wait a minute! You must live, so must I! I am not accustomed to poverty. I thought you knew that when you married me! I think we've discussed this question often enough. Now, when you find yourself unable to support us both properly, you blame me!"

"I am not blaming you, Adele, I——"

"You had no right to marry on your pittance!"

"But I told you all about myself, Adele," wearily, "and you seemed satisfied."

"Yes!" she flared. "Because you loved me then!"

He glanced at her keenly. What was the

use? Of late she had only laughed if he happened to mention his affection for her. And he did love her, even while he saw that she was ruining him. He was proud of her beauty, her appearance, her social distinction. But it was all so far beyond his means. Again he broke the silence:

"As God is my witness, Adele, I love you more now than I ever did!"

She smiled sarcastically.

"You love me!" she echoed. "If you loved me you wouldn't have let me go everywhere by myself. You don't hate me—you are merely indifferent. Your *profession* is your love!" She laid bitter emphasis on the word "profession."

"And if you loved me," he retorted, "you wouldn't have wanted to go when I couldn't. You knew I couldn't afford to!"

She made no answer. The night wind stole in and ruffled her hair about her temples; outside the trees whispered softly; the ticking of a clock grew monotonous.

"Adele," began the man suddenly, "next Saturday I have to pay Dowman his money—I've borrowed a big sum from him. If I don't I'll be branded. I can't postpone it any more. I haven't got the money, and I see no way of getting it, so I'm going away."

The girl turned slowly, wide-eyed.

"Going — away?" she echoed, uncomprehendingly, looking at him. "And what of me?"

His face hardened with desperate resolution.

"You," he answered grimly, "are going with me!"

"But I don't understand?"

"Oh, don't you? Well, you soon will!"

"This is no time to be enigmatic; what are you talking about?"

"Adele" — his voice had suddenly gone hoarse — "there's no way out but one, and we're going where creditors don't follow! I've reached the end of my rope, and I'll not leave you behind to fritter away my insurance on clothes and jimcracks!"

He rose and walked up and down the room several times. Still standing and facing her, he continued:

"You want to know where we are going? God only knows! I don't! But you are going with me! Before the end I want you to know that I heard about you and young Atwell. People are talking. Of course there's nothing to it, yet it hurt me to have my wife talked about in that fashion. You never will be again, I can promise you that!

"We've made an awful fizzle of things, yet I always loved you, bear that in mind! You brought us both to this desperate end, and yet I love you—this minute. I cannot bear to leave you behind. You made the regular conventional start—I am making the inevitable finish! I may be a failure, but I'm still too proud to stand disgrace. I am going to kill you and then I am going to kill myself! We're both going out—together!"

The girl sat staring stupidly at her husband. Her faculties whirled in a startled, disordered chaos, and she could not command her tongue. Irrelevantly she thought it curious that she had never before noticed the threads of silver at Will's temples, how drawn and pale he was, how thin!

Then the full horror of it all burst upon her: Will intended to kill the both of them! Horror raced through her. She tried to speak, but her voice would not come; her tongue seemed paralyzed. She watched him sit down before the little clock on her dresser. From his pocket he drew a heavy automatic pistol. He glanced at her a moment, then closely examined the pistol. He cocked it, holding it ready.

"It is now twenty minutes after twelve," she heard him say, as if from a great distance; "at twelve-thirty sharp, we — we ——" His voice trailed away.

Again the clock's tock-tock dominated the room. The window curtains danced in the fragrant breeze; cold beads of sweat stood out on her brow. Still she sat speechless, horrified, fascinated, unable to move. Her husband's face was white and tense, sharp lines of pain etching it horribly.

"You'll remember—if one remembers those things where we're going—that I always cared. Why couldn't you have been satisfied with that? Why couldn't you have thrived on love in a cottage? How horrible that we cannot face the world, just because you were insatiable in your demands! How terrible that I should have to do this or face the world a bankrupt—acknowledge to all the world that I am a failure; that I couldn't even manage

you! Do you think the pleasure you had is worth it?" He glanced at the clock and cocked the pistol.

"It is one minute of!" he whispered.

The light flashed upon the sinister blue barrel as he raised it and pointed it at her heart. She stared, motionless, speechless. Then something within her seemed to snap. Her eyes suddenly filled with tears.

"Will—dearest!" she cried in a choked quaver, "don't—*don't!*—we'll start again."

His hand was raised, his finger was pressing the trigger, and she threw herself upon him. But fast as she was, there was one hand faster. The burglar could stand it no longer. He threw himself upon the man and in a moment they were struggling fiercely for possession of the weapon. Just once did the man cry out in astonishment at the undreamed-of interference, then he viciously tackled the burglar. But the burglar was younger. Slowly he bent the man back, then a smashing blow above the temple stretched him out. The burglar rose, holding the man's automatic. His mouth was bleeding where the other's fist had landed. He turned to face the woman, who had looked with startled eyes upon his advent.

"It's all right," he gasped. "Don't worry—I haven't hurt him. He'll come around in a minute or two. That was close work, I'll tell the world! Now, here, kid, I probably saved your life, so don't you make any noise and cut out the funny work while I get out of here. Get me? I suppose you know why I'm here, eh? Well, I got your jewelry, all right, but I'm going to give it back to you, see? I don't need it that bad that I'll take it away from a guy who's in so Dutch he wants to kill his wife and himself because he's broke! Not me! You keep 'em, kid, and hock 'em, and hand 'em to him so he can use the money to come back with, see? An' you help him this time. Get me? You came damn near makin' this an awful night for all of us."

She stood staring stupidly at him, her eyes straying from his to the figure on the floor; then she suddenly collapsed and lay motionless beside her husband.

The burglar bent over them both for a moment and wiped his brow.

"Sufferin' catfish!" he muttered. "This kind of thing is out of my line. I guess it'll be all right, though, when they come to; but I'll keep his gat in case he changes his mind! And now I'll get out of here as fast as the good Lord will let me!"

He put the pilfered jewels on the vanity case where they would be sure to be seen and stole quietly out of the house. For many blocks he doubled and crossed and finally came to a quite different section of the city; a section where drab, dirty houses told a tale of poverty and neglect. Into an inky hallway he went and up five flights of stairs.

Once in his room, he lit a lamp and sat down, exhausted, his mind rapidly turning over the scenes of the night. He shuddered. Death had been too near to be pleasant. He took out the automatic he had taken away from the man in the fight and stared at it. It was a heavy calibre and brand new. Then his eyes narrowed as he turned it over and over, rapidly going through its functions with practiced fingers.

He came to his feet with a vivid oath.

"The dirty crook!" he muttered savagely, staring out into the night; "the dirty crook! Why, the damn thing isn't even loaded!" His mind raced again with the events of the night and a smile slowly came to his lips. "Some little bluff," he whispered, "and he'll get away with it, too!"

Current News

SWOLLEN GRAIN SAVES SHIP

A steamer which struck an iceberg off Newfoundland recently was saved from sinking by the grain in her forehold. The water caused this to swell, thus stopping the leak.

LAYS LARGE EGG ONCE A WEEK

Some hens cheat the consumer in the size of the eggs that they produce, but Mrs. A. Grotjohn of Columbus, Ohio, has a six month's old pullet who gives a full value in her eggs, even at 65 cents a dozen. Every Monday for the last three weeks this pullet, which is of the Rhode Island variety, has laid an egg that was larger than a duck egg. The hen lays a normal size egg every day, but on Monday she seems to be inspired, for the egg is as big as two of ordinary size.

HER MASTER'S VOICE

Mrs. Twaddle was in a state of excitement when the new music box arrived. She had the instrument placed in the room with her pet parrot.

The bird was a particularly sagacious specimen of its kind, and to test it she placed on the machine a record that she had had specially made, "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," as sung by Mr. Twaddle in his approved drawing-room manner.

At the very first note Polly opened her eyes in surprise and then flew to her perch, where she rocked herself to and fro in speechless and deep astonishment while the machine ground out the rest of the tune.

"There, Polly," said Mrs. Twaddle, when the song had come to an end, "what do you think of that?"

"Holy smoke!" shrieked the bird, with her head on one side and winking wickedly. "We've got the old man boxed up this time all right!"—*Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.*

MOTH-PROOF WOOLENS

Under the name of "Eulan" a new product of the German chemical industry has been placed on the European market. Consul Wallace J. Young of Bradford, England, reports that the base of the new product appears to be a certain yellow dye known as Martius yellow, the use of which, it is claimed, will render wool mothproof.

TAR SAND ANALYZED

Several tests of the McMurray tar sands have been made by the Dutchers' Oil Extraction plant, Edmonton, Alberta. The tests made from two small cars of tar sand analyzed 18 per cent. gasoline, 13 per cent. kerosene, 13 per cent. lubrication oils, with the remaining 16 per cent. representing what is termed light and medium gasoline oil.

2,000 SHOTS A MINUTE

The Munich correspondent of the London *Times* is informed by an unnamed expert that the Germans have perfected a triple-barreled machine gun, electrically operated, weighing about twenty-two pounds and capable of spreading 2,000 bullets per minute in a complete circle. The three barrels could be operated by a gunner on land a half-mile distant.

This is cited as an instance of German industries devising engines of war, and the correspondent further declares that Germany is concealing her armies under civilian guides and that chemists are conducting researches into poisonous gases and bacteriological possibilities of destruction.

The correspondent says that he has heard the conviction expressed by "more than one authority" that the Oppau explosion would not have occurred "had no experimental work connected with the manufacture of engines of war in some shape or form been indulged in there."

TO DESTROY ARMY HORSES

Horse lovers throughout the country have been shocked by Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill's announcement in the House of Commons that the army horses in Mesopotamia are to be killed because it is too expensive to bring them home.

It was explained that they are mainly heavy draft horses for which there is no local use and that they had to be fed on imported fodder. The nearest possible markets are India or Egypt, but the difficulty and cost of transportation thence are said to be prohibitive.

Shipping men say it costs $150 to $175 to bring a horse from the East to England, not counting horsemen's wages. The War Office view is that it is better for the horses to be killed humanely and scientifically than to be left in the hands of natives who would not care for them properly, and no one would suggest turning them adrift in the desert.

LATIN WORDS ON DOLLAR BILL; CAN YOU READ THEM?

Many persons, and even those with a rudimentary or fair acquaintance with the Latin language, find hardship in translating the Latin that is on the dollar bill, as well as on all other denominations of currency issued by the United States. This Latin is in the great circle of the seal of the Treasury of the United States and that seal is near the middle of the right-hand half of the bill. The legend on the seal is "Thesaur Amer Septent Sigil," being an abbreviation of the Latin, "Thesauri Americæ Septentrionalis Sigillum," meaning "The seal of the Treasury of North America."

In addition to the Latin inscription on the seal there are a number of symbols on the seal, stars, a balance and keys. The thirteen stars represent the thirteen original colonies. Justice, the blind goddess holding the balance, has always been a favorite with the devisers of State seals.

The first design submitted for the Great Seal of the United States had this device in full, but it was finally omitted entirely from the one finally adopted. The designers of our Treasury seal used the balance alone as an emblem of justice. Keys, in secular heraldry, have been used from remote antiquity to denote offices of State. The history of the seal of the Treasury was written a few years ago by Emma M. V. Triepel, librarian of the Treasury Department, and that account of the origin incorporated in one of the annual reports of the register of the Treasury. Miss Triepel found that a committee was appointed by the Continental Congress September 26, 1778, to devise a seal for the Treasury. There were three members, John Witherspoon, Gouverneur Morris and Richard Henry Lee. In the journals of Congress for the same date is a resolution from which the following references to the seal were taken:

"Resolved, That the controller shall keep the Treasury books and seal and file all accounts. * * * and shall draw bills under said seal."

The Treasury Department's librarian wrote that no reference to any report from this committee is to be found in the publications of the Continental Congress, so the date cannot be given of its adoption, but impressions of the Continental seal have been found on documents dated 1782. When the present form of government was instituted in 1789 the Treasury seal of the confederation was continued in use, and is found on papers issued in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The old seal of the Continental period was replaced in 1849 by another cut in cast steel by Edward Stabler of Montgomery County, Md., says the *Washington Star*. He was ordered to make a fac-simile of the old one, which was nearly worn out. Mr. Stabler suggested some minor improvements, but was informed that the design must be copied exactly in accordance with the law. However, on comparing an impression from the Continental seal taken in 1816 with one from the seal now in use a slight difference in the wreaths on the side of the shield is to be found, and tiny dots have been introduced on what was at the previous date blank space about the principal features within the shield.

The historian of the seal says that the diameter of the seal now in use is one-eighth inch greater than that of the Continental seal. But these differences are so minute that the casual observer would never notice them. In all essential features they are the same, so that the design of the seal of the Treasury Department is older than the National Government.

CHILDREN LIVE WILD IN RUSSIAN WOODS

Children are living in the woods and fields like young animals in some parts of the famine district of Saratov, says an official wireless dispatch from Moscow. They are little waifs who have fled from the famine-stricken cities and villages, and subsist on roots and grass. When adults approach they flee, showing every evidence of fear.

Overcrowding of children's homes has been carried so far in the Syrzan and Ufa districts that some of the institutions are sheltering four times as many children as they have accommodation for. In these places children take turns in occupying such beds as are available, one small famine victim crawling into a bed the moment another child vacates it.

"Entire families are jumping into rivers, and cases are reported of parents strangling their children rather than see them die by starvation," said the dispatch, which also gives the first report of disorderly migration. "Over the roads in the Irbit district is moving a band of disorderly refugees from starving Volga."

VETERAN "LOST" SIXTY YEARS

Andrew Hanford went to war in 1861 and was never heard from again until November 15, when, 81 years old, grizzled and gray, he came back to his native town, Wilton, Conn., to make claim to half his father's estate.

Andrew's father, John T. Hanford, died in 1870, and his estate, including fifty acres of land in Wilton, has never been settled, nor has Wilton foreclosed on any of the property, although no taxes have been paid in these fifty years. There is one other heir living, Mrs. Caroline Amelia Somers of Stamford, N. Y. Three brothers, Amarari, Daniel and Moses, have not been heard from in years and presumably are dead.

Mr. Hanford stayed in the South after the war, buying a farm in Holliston, N. C., where he now owns a cotton plantation. He has been able to find only two men who knew him when he left for the front, sixty years ago.

The veteran declared he did not come North to collect his inheritance, but merely to see his old home again. When asked why he had not let his parents know that he was living, Hanford said he was the youngest son and was the butt of all his brothers' jokes, and so he "just thought he would go it alone."

ARTISTIC GLASSBLOWER OUTDOING NATURE

Man is outdoing nature at the American Museum of Natural History, says the *Mentor Magazine*. Not only have museum scientists assembled one of the world's greatest natural history collections but they are reproducing with absolute fidelity specimens and natural settings that stand the effects of time better than the originals.

To do this the museum has organized a staff of men skilled in curious and, in some cases, absolute trades. In one exhibit alone 100,000 glass parts were blown, many of them tiny threads, and then all welded to the whole. One man is an artist in tin; he cuts and solders together orchids that a debutante could wear.

Formerly it was considered unscientific to mount and set exhibits naturally. In those days animals were truly "stuffed." The pelt was hung head down and the interior crammed with straw until it was near bursting. The finished product bore a vague resemblance to the live animal. Later wire skeletons were introduced, and then came the new scientists who believed that in order to instruct they must first interest. Accordingly new methods were introduced.

Fish, distorted and unpleasant to look at in jars of alcohol, are created entirely from artificial material. The sea life groups of the museum are remarkable. One, in which a visitor looks through a 40-inch magnifying glass at a minute fraction of sea bottom, cost more than $5,000. Hundreds of sketches, the result of much study of the living animals through a water glass, color notes and photographs, were first made. Then a small scale model was made for the workmen's guidance, and the exhibit proper started. Wax, glass, sheet and liquid celluloid, in addition to the natural elements, went into its construction. Stagecraft was called upon to produce with lights and glass the amazing underwater effect.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. Here are the latest numbers:

43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
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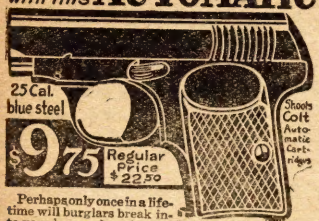

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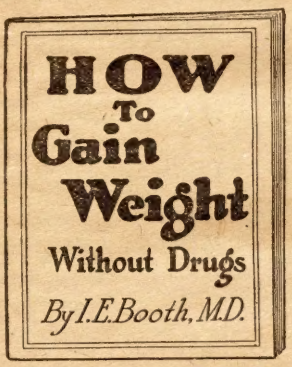

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